

**DONNA MI PREGA BY GUIDO CAVALCANTI  
WITH TRADUCTION AND COMMENTARY  
BY EZRA POUND: FOLLOWED BY NOTES  
AND A CONSIDERATION OF THE SONNET**

BECAUSE a lady asks me, I would tell  
Of an affect that comes often and is fell  
And is so overweening: Love, by name.  
E'en its deniers can now hear the truth,  
I for the nonce to them that know it call,  
Having no hope at all

that man who is base in heart

Can bear his part of wit

into the light of it,

And save they know't aright from nature's source  
I have no will to prove Love's course

or say

Where he takes rest; who maketh him to be;  
Or what his active *virtu* is, or what his force;  
Nay, nor his very essence or his mode;  
What his placation; why he is in verb,  
Or if a man have might

To show him visible to men's sight.

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## DONNA MI PREGA

IN memory's locus taketh he his state  
 Formed there in manner as a mist of light  
 Upon a dusk that is come from Mars and stays.  
 Love is created, hath a sensate name,  
 His modus takes from soul, from heart his will;  
 From form seen doth he start, that, understood,  
 Taketh in latent intellect—  
 As in a subject ready—

place and abode,  
 Yet in that place it ever is unstill,  
 Spreading its rays, it tendeth never down  
 By quality, but is its own effect unendingly  
 Not to delight, but in an ardour of thought  
 That the base likeness of it kindleth not.

IT is not *virtu*, but perfection's source  
 Lying within perfection postulate  
 Not by the reason, but 'tis felt, I say.  
 Beyond salvation, holdeth its judging force,  
 Maintains intention reason's peer and mate;  
 Poor in discernment, being thus weakness' friend,  
 Often his power meeteth with death in the end  
 Be he withstayed

or from true course  
 bewrayed  
 E'en though he meet not with hate  
 or villeiny

Save that perfection fails, be it but a little;  
 Nor can man say he hath his life by chance  
 Or that he hath not stablished seigniory  
 Or loseth power, e'en lost to memory.

HE comes to be and is when will's so great  
 It twists itself from out all natural measure;  
 Leisure's adornment puts he then never on,  
 Never thereafter, but moves changing state,  
 Moves changing colour, or to laugh or weep  
 Or wries the face with fear and little stays,  
 Yea, resteth little  
 yet is found the most  
 Where folk of worth be host.

And his strange property sets sighs to move  
 And wills man look into unformèd space  
 Rousing there thirst

that breaketh into flame.

None can imagine love

that knows not love;

Love doth not move, but draweth all to him;

Nor doth he turn

for a whim

to find delight

Nor to seek out—surely—

great knowledge or slight.

**LOOK** drawn from like,

delight maketh certain in seeming,

Nor can in covert cower,

beauty so near,

Not yet wild-cruel as darts,

So hath man craft from fear

in such his desire

To follow a noble spirit,

edge, that is, and point to the dart,

Though from her face indiscernible;

He, caught, falleth

plumb on the spike of the targe.

Who well proceedeth, form not seeth,

following his own emanation.

There, beyond colour, essence set apart,

In midst of darkness light light giveth forth

Beyond all falsity, worthy of faith, alone

That in him solely is compassion born.

**SAFE** may'st 'ow go my canzon whither thee pleaseth

Thou art so fair attired that every man and each

Shall praise thy speech

So he have sense or glow with reason's fire,

To stand with other

hast 'ow no desire

## PARTIAL EXPLANATION

A commentary is a piece of writing in which we expose and seek to excuse our ignorance of the subject. The less we know, the longer our explanations.

The preceding canzone was known as "the philosophic canzone"; the stir that it caused, over and above the stir aroused by any beautiful work, may be attributed in part to the state of philosophic opinion in and about A.D. 1290. Guido is called a "natural philosopher," I think an "atheist," and certainly an "Epicurean," not that any one had then any clear idea or has now any very definite notion of what Epicurus taught. But a natural philosopher was a much less safe person than a "moral philosopher."<sup>1</sup>

It is not so much what Guido says in the poem, as the familiarity that he shows with dangerous thinking: *natural demonstration* and the proof by experience or (?) experiment. If after-dinner conversation in the Uberti and Cavalcanti families was any warrant for Guido's tone it is small wonder that Dante who was, as a young man, *bien pensant*, and probably quite content with the orthodoxy of Guinicello, thought it necessary to lodge the tough-minded seniors of these tribes in the Tenth Canto of his *Inferno*, where, indeed, the elder Cavalcanti might seem to be expecting his son.

My own sympathies extend even to the disrespect of Virgilio, but that point may seem irrelevant.

From this poem and from passages elsewhere it would seem that Guido had derived certain notions from the Aristotelian commentators, the "*filosofica famiglia*," Ibn Sina, for the *spiriti*, *spiriti* of the eyes, of the senses; Ibn Rachd, *che il gran comento feo*, for the demand for intelligence on the part of the recipient; Albertus Magnus, for the proof by experience; and possibly Grosseteste, De Luce et de Incohatione Formarum, although this will need proving.

At any rate for any serious thought in Guido's time we must suppose the Arabian background: the concentric spheres of the heavens, Ibn Badja's itinerary of the soul going to God, Averroes' specifications for the degrees of comprehension; and we may perhaps consider Guido as one of that "tenuous line who from Albertus

<sup>1</sup> See *Mediaevalism and Mediaevalism* (Guido Cavalcanti) by Ezra Pound, THE DIAL, March 1928.



Magnus to the renaissance" meant the freedom of thought, the contempt, or at least a moderated respect, for stupid authority.

He is possibly against Sigier and for Albertus, he wants no Truth that contradicts the "*rationes naturales*," he is not jamming down a dogma unsupported by nature. His truth is not against "*natural dimostramento*" or based merely on authority. It is a truth for elect recipients, not a truth universally spreadable or acceptable. The "*dove sta memoria*" is Platonism. The "*non razionale ma che si sente*" is for experiment, it is against the tyranny of the syllogism, blinding and obscurantist. The tone of his mind is infinitely more "modern" than Dante's. "*Fuor di salute, guidicar mantiene*," his position, here as on the rest of these cardinal points, shows him to be "very dangerous" to the peace of the mediaeval mind, if immobility may be considered as "peace."

And all this is done with the suavity of a song, with the neatness of scalpel-cut. Guido is eclectic, he swallows none of his authors whole. There is no open "atheism," indeed no direct attack on any church dogma, but there was probably a sense of briskness; I mean it would not have been comforting to lovers of quiet.

If part of this is conjecture, I think one can, at any rate, scarcely exaggerate the gulf between Guido's state of mind and that of Dante in the same epoch, or between it and Dante's willingness to take on any sort of holy and orthodox furniture. Dante's "heresies" are due to feeling, annoyance with Popes and so forth, rather than to intellectual hunger, or to his feeling cramped in the Aquinian universe.

I may be wrong, but I cannot believe that Guido "swallowed" Aquinas. It is perhaps by merest accident, but we find nowhere in his poems any implication of a belief in a geocentric or theocentric material universe.

#### "BUT THE POEM IS VERY OBSCURE"

The poem is extremely clear in a number of places, the philosophic terms are used with a complete precision of technique. I am aware that I have distorted "*accidente*" into affect, but I have done so in order not to lose the tone of my opening line, by introducing an English word of *double entente*.

For the rest there are certain enigmas, and the celebrated com-

mentators have done nothing to solve them. Those which face us to-day are precisely the same ones that faced Del Garbo, or Di Giunta in 1527.

Considering the clarity and precision of the text where it is clear, I am loath to think that these obscure points indicate merely a loose usage or *remplissage* on the part of the author.

Textual research brings us to a definite limit of knowledge about certain manuscript readings. The earliest known copyists found certain passages either illegible or incomprehensible: as for example, *la gir*, *largir*, or *laire simiglianza*.

Frate Egidio (Colonna, Romano, il beato, degli Agostini) goes round it. He begins his commentary with a graceful description of a notable lady, who must have begun life "of Paphos and the Isles" but who has attained a safe anonymity. She is seated on an anonymous mountain, by an anonymous fountain, whence she sends forth her ministers: Solomon and Ovidius Naso. However, *il beato* casts no satisfactory light on the phrase, "*largir simiglianza*." Dino del Garbo is, in the modern sense, a much more serious character. He quotes a good deal of Aristotle, explains the preceding line as if it read "*E si non ha diletto*," or "*quando non ha diletto*," but slurs over the *la gir* or *largir*. The manuscripts do not help us.

*La gir* means turn there, and *largir* is to give away freely. To give likeness freely? Or is *simiglianza* the subject?

For purpose of translation one has, as Rossetti remarks, to cut through various knots, and make arbitrary decisions. I have perforce, here as elsewhere, selected one of the possible meanings, or at least attempted to do so, but without any wish to insist upon it, or to conceal either the depths of my ignorance, or my width of uncertainty.

Gilson<sup>1</sup> summarizes Grosseteste's ideas on light as follows:

"*La lumière est une substance corporelle très subtile et qui se rapproche de l'incorporel. Ses propriétés caractéristiques sont de s'engendrer elle-même perpétuellement et de se diffuser sphériquement autour d'un point d'une manière instantanée. Donnons-nous un point lumineux, il s'engendre instantanément autour de ce point comme centre une sphère lumineuse immense. La diffusion de la lumière ne peut être contrariée que par deux raisons: ou bien elle*

<sup>1</sup> Philosophie du Moyen Age, par Etienne Gilson, Payot, Paris, 1925.

rencontre une obscurité qui l'arrête, ou bien elle finit par atteindre la limite extrême de sa raréfaction, et la propagation de la lumière prend fin par là même. Cette substance extrêmement ténue est aussi l'étoffe dont toutes choses sont faites; elle est la première forme corporelle et ce que certains nomment la corporéité."

This French summary is most able, and most lucid. It is far more suggestive of the Canzone: Donna Mi Prega, than the original Latin of Grosseteste,<sup>1</sup> but my suggestion is not that Guido is a mere dilettante poetaster dragging in philosophic terms or caught by a verbal similarity (e.g., as Lorenzo Medici, dabbling in Platonism in his rhymed account of talk with Ficino). For "*risplende in se perpetual effecto*" we do find the Latin approximation:

(De Luce, the Baur edition) P. 51—*Lux enim per se in omnem partem se ipsam diffundit. . . .*

. . . *a puncto lucis sphaera lucis quamvis magna . . . generetur . . .*

P. 52—*Lux prima forma in materia prima creata, seipsam seipsam . . . multiplicans. (? multiplicans = largir.)*

P. 56—*aer quoque ex se corpus spirituale vel spiritum corporalem generans.*

P. 58—*Forma autem, ut pote simplicissima, unitatis obtinet locum, as bearing on the "formato" or "non formato loco."*

P. 73—*aut transitus radii ad rem visam est rectus per medium diaphani unius generis . . . aut transitus . . . modi spiritualis, per quam ipsum est speculum . . . transitus . . . per . . . plura diaphana . . .*

P. 91—reference to Plato . . . *anima substantia seipsam movens.*

P. 345—*formam lucis in aere vel in corpore . . . transparente . . . nec lucis essentiam ibi esse . . . conceditur . . . nomine formae habitus censentur . . .*

P. 347—*aeternae rationes rerum causatarum, from the Timaeus.*

Grosseteste derives from Arabic treatises on perspectives. It is too much to say that Guido had, perforce, read the Bishop of Lincoln, but certainly that is the sort of thing he had read.

<sup>1</sup> L. Baur, *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste*, Münster, 1912, *Beiträge z. Gesch. Phil. d. Mittelalt.* Latin text and German commentary, vols. IX and XVIII, 4-6.

His definition of "*l'accidente*," i.e., the whole poem, is a scholastic definition in form, it is as clear and definite as the prose treatises of the period, it shows an equal acuteness of thought. It seems to me quite possible that the whole of it is a sort of metaphor on the generation of light, or that at any rate greater familiarity with the philosophy of the period would elucidate the remaining tangles, particularly if one search for the part of philosophy that was in a state of activity in the years 1270-1290. One cannot absolutely rule out the possibility of Guido's having seen even some scrap of MS. by Roger Bacon, although this is, perhaps, unlikely.

Considering the quality of Guido's mind as manifest in indisputable passages it would, I think, be the greatest possible error to imagine that any part of the poem is mere decoration or stuffing. "*Talento di voler*" looks weak, but may not even that be due to an *idée fixe* on our part—"voler provare" meaning perhaps technically, "try to prove," and the whole phrase, "I have no inclination to attempt proof" rather than "wish to will to prove"? If not, the *talento* is dragged in for the rhyme, and we must count it a blemish.

It may not be amiss, as illustrating the contemporary situation of philosophic thought in the British desert, and the recognition of one serious mind by another, to recall an incident of fifteen years past. When the late T. E. Hulme was trying to be a philosopher in that *milieu*, and fussing about Sorel and Bergson and getting them translated into English, I spoke to him one day of the difference between Guido's precise interpretative metaphor, and the Petrarchan fustian and ornament, pointing out that Guido thought in accurate terms; that the phrases correspond to definite sensations undergone; in fact, very much what I had said in my early preface to the *Sonnets and Ballate*.

Hulme took some time over it in silence, and then finally said: "That is very interesting"; and after a pause: "That is more interesting than anything any one ever said to me. It is more interesting than anything I ever read in a book."

I was talking of certain passages in the *Sonnets and Ballate*, and not of this canzone, but the point should hold as well for the canzone.

What we need now is not so much a commentator as a lexicon.

It is the precise sense of certain terms as *understood at that particular epoch* that one would like to have set before one.

For example, does "*intenzion*" mean intention (a matter of will)? does it mean intuition, intuitive perception, or does the line hold the same meaning as that in Yeats's Countess Cathleen, *intenzion* being intention, and *ragione* meaning not reason, but "being right"?

At such points the commentators either branch off and give their own theories about the cosmos in general, or they restate with vague verbosity what Guido has said with greater pre- and concision.

As the philosophy of the time has been completely scrapped, there are very few specialists who can help us. I should be delighted to hear from any one who has more definite knowledge. Up to the present I have found out what little I have found out by concentration on the text, and not by reading commentators, and I strongly suspect that that is the road that the next man will have to follow.

There are certain definite impasses, for definite palaeographical reasons. The copyists simply did not know, and we are unlikely to find any more or anterior manuscripts.

The other dimension of the poem is its lyricism, in the strictest sense of the term. It is made for song, not for rhetorical declamation; on which count Dante twice mentions it in *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, II, 12. First in connexion with his own: "*Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*"; and secondly in comparison with his: "*Poscia ch' Amor del tutto m'ha lasciato.*"

## THE CANZONE

As it appears in the manuscript Laurenziana 46-40, folio 32 verso, with one error corrected.

**D**ONNA mi priegha  
D un accidente perch i voglio dire  
che sovente  
e fero

Ed e si altero  
ch e chiamato amore

SICCHE chi l negha  
 possa il ver sentire  
 Ond al presente  
 chonoscente  
 chero

Perch i no spero  
ch om di basso chore

**A**TAL ragione <sup>1</sup> porti chonoscenza  
Che senza  
natural dimostramento

Non o talento  
di voler provare <sup>2</sup>

Laove nasce e chi lo fa criare

**E QUAL** e sua virtù e sua potenza  
L'essenza  
e poi ciascun suo movimento

E l piacimento  
che l fa dire amare  
E se hom per veder lo puo mostrare:—

<sup>1</sup> Di Giunta gives: *raggio ne*.

<sup>2</sup> MS. error: *mostrare*.

One

LA qual da Marte<sup>1</sup>  
viene e fa dimora  
Elgh e creato  
e a sensato  
nome

**V**IEN da veduta forma ches sintende  
Che prende

PERCHE da qualitatde non discende  
Risplende  
in se perpetuale effecto  
Non a diletto  
ma consideranza  
Perche non pote laire simiglgianza :—

<sup>1</sup> Da Marte: I suppose as "impulse." At any rate there is a neoplatonic gradation of the assumption of faculties as the mind descends into matter through the seven spheres, via the gate of cancer: in Saturn, reason; in Jupiter, practical and moral; in Mars, "the spirited"; in Venus, the sensuous. Cf. Dante's *voi ch' intendendo il terzo ciel' movete*. Macrobius In Somnium Scipionis; and Plotinus, Ennead.



## DONNA MI PREGA

**N**ON e virtute  
 ma da questa vene  
 Perfezione  
 ches si pone  
 tale

Non razionale  
 ma che si sente dico

**F**UOR di salute  
 giudichar mantene  
 E l antenzione  
 per ragione  
 vale

Diserne male  
 in chui e vicio amicho

**D**I sua virtu seghue ispeso morte  
 Se forte  
 la virtu fosse impedita  
 La quale aita  
 la contraria via  
 Nonche opposito natural sia

**M**A quanto che da ben perfett e torte  
 Per sorte<sup>1</sup>  
 non po dir om ch abbi vita  
 Che stabilita  
 non a signioria  
 A simil puo valer quant uom l oblia:—

<sup>1</sup> MS. might read *forte*, but wrongly.

**L**ESSER quando lo voler a tanto <sup>1</sup>  
Ch oltre misura  
di natura  
torna

Poi non si adorna  
di riposo mai

# MOVE cambiando coltr riso in pianto

El la fighura  
con paura  
storna

Pocho soggiorna  
anchor in lui vedrai

**C**H en gente di valore il piu si trova  
La nova  
qualita move a sospiri

E vol ch om mirj  
in un formato<sup>2</sup> locho  
Destandositj lo qual manda focho

IMMAGINAR nol puo hom che nol prova  
E non si mova  
perche al lui si tirj  
Et non ssi a ggiri  
per trovarvi giocho  
E certamente gran saver ne pocho:—

<sup>1</sup> Di Giunta: *L'essere è, quando lo volere è tanto.*

<sup>2</sup> Rivalta gives: *in non formato*.

I can only make simple sense of *non formato*, or complicated sequence of thought in reading *formato* without the *non*. But on eleventh thought perhaps my translation does violence to impartial palaeography. Reading *ferrato* or *formato*, the sense wd. be perception, falling upon will in the possible whereabouts of the possible or potential intellect marks a locus or area, it does not create a stasis (the *possanza* of the second strophe). This area wd. be the *formato locho* to be contemplated, all of which is rather a strain on modern reader unaccustomed to poems having coherent thought from one end to the other, unaccustomed in fact to *any* mental sequence or coherence. Or still more briefly: "wills that he look at the form of beauty already engendered in his own mind." The words are not yet devitalized. *Immaginar* still meant "to form an image."

## DONNA MI PREGA

**D**A simil tragge  
 Che fa parere compleSSIONE e sghuardj  
lo piacere  
piu certo

Non puo chovertò  
star quand e si giunto

**NON** gia selvagge  
la bilta son dardj  
 Ch a tal volere  
per temere

sperto  
 Uom seghue merto  
spirito che punto

**E** NON si puo chonoscere per lo viso  
 Chompriso  
biancho in tale obbietto chade  
 E chi ben aude <sup>1</sup>

forma non si vede  
 Perche lo mena chi dallui precede <sup>2</sup>

**FUOR** di cholore essere diviso  
 Aseiso  
mezzo schuro luce rade  
 Fuor d ogni fraude  
dice dengno in fede  
 Che solo da chostui nasce merzede:—

**T**U puoj sichuramente gir chanzone  
 Dove ti piace ch i t o si ornato  
 Ch assa lodata  
sara tua ragione

Dalle persone  
ch anno intendimento  
 Di star con altre tu non aj talento:—

<sup>1</sup> vade.

<sup>2</sup> da lei, and procede.

## THE OTHER DIMENSION

The danger of a canzone composed entirely in hendecasyllabics is that of going heavy. Dante avoids it in *Donne ch'Avete* without using inner rhymes. Here Guido employs them.

The canzone of Guido's which Dante takes as a model of "construction" is not the *Donna Mi Prega*, but *Poiche di Doglia*, of which only the first strophe is preserved, and this strophe for some obscure reason (or from simple habits of imitation) all editors insist on printing as a *Ballata*, beginning with *Di Giunta* and ending, curiously enough, with *Rivalta*. Apart from Dante's clear reference to it, one should be able to observe its formation.

The reader will not arrive at a just appreciation of the canzone unless he be aware that there are three kinds of melopoeia, that is to say: poems made to speak, to chant, and to sing. This canzone, Guido's poetry in general, and the poems of mediaeval Provence and Tuscany in general, were all made to be sung. Relative estimates of value inside these periods must take count of the cantabile values.

Modern professors with lifted eyebrows patronizing Dante's judgements in such matters appear to me rather like hypothetical persons who having taken an elementary course in phonetics or physics and having heard their wives' sisters play *Chaminade* bring out: "Bach's opinions on the fugue which our later criticism has superseded . . ."

The canzone was to poets of this period what the fugue was to musicians in Bach's time. It is a highly specialized form, having its own self-imposed limits. I trust I have managed to print the *Donna Mi Prega* in such a way that its articulations strike the eye without need of a rhyme table. The strophe is here seen to consist of four parts, the second lobe equal to the first as required by the rules of the canzone; and the fourth happening to equal the third, which is not required by the rules as Dante explains them.

Each strophe is articulated by 14 terminal and 12 inner rhyme sounds. That means that 52 out of every 154 syllables are bound into pattern. The strophe reverses the proportions of the sonnet, as the short lobes precede the longer. This reversal is obviously of advantage to the strophe *as part of* a longer composition.

At this point we divagate for fuller ultimate reference. The prestige of the sonnet in English is a relic of insular ignorance. The sonnet was not a great poetic *invention*. The sonnet occurred automatically when some chap got stuck in the effort to make a canzone. His "genius" consisted in the recognition of the fact that he had come to the end of his subject-matter.

It should not be necessary for me now to quote the whole of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. That notable opusculus is available in many and cheap editions. My own brief study of Arnaut Daniel may throw a further light on earlier phases of the canzone in the "*lingua materna*."

As to the use of canzoni in English, whether for composition or in translation: it is not that there aren't rhymes in English; or enough rhymes or even enough two-syllable rhymes, but that the english two-syllable rhymes are of the wrong timbre and weight. They have extra consonants at the end, as in *flowing* and *going*; or they go squishy; or they fluff up as in *snowy* and *goeth*. They are not "*rime agute*"; they do not offer readily the qualities and contrasts that Dante has discussed so ably in *De Eloquentia*.

Even so, it is not that one "cannot" use them but that they demand, at times, sacrifice of values that had not come into being and were therefore not missed in Limoges A. D. 1200. Against which we have our concealed rhymes and our semi-submerged alliteration. (*En passant*, the alliteration in Guido's canzone is almost as marked as the rhyming though it enters as free component.)

It is not always that one language cannot be made to do what another has done, but that it is not always expeditious to approach the same goal by the same alley. I do not think rhyme-aesthetic, any rhyme-aesthetic, can ever do so much damage to english verse as that done by latinization, in Milton's time and before. The rhyme pattern is, after all, a matter of chiselling, and a question of the "*lima amorosa*," whereas latinization is a matter of compost, and in the very substance of the speech. By latinization I mean here the attempt to use an uninflected language as if it were an inflected one, i.e., as if each word had a little label or postscript telling the reader at once what part it takes in the sentence, and specifying its several relations. Not only does such usage—with remnants of latin order—ruin the word order in English, but it

shows a fundamental miscomprehension of the organism of the language, and fundamental stupidity of this kind is bound to spread its effects through the whole fibre of a man's writing.

#### HENDECASYLLABLES

Another prevalent error is that of dealing with Italian hendecasyllables as if they were English "iambic pentameter." One is told in college that Italian verse is not accentual but syllabic but I can't remember any one's having ever presented the Anglo-American reader with a lucid discrimination between the two systems of measurement.

Some day I shall erect a monument to the books one reads in country hotels. Their titles and their authors evade one. One is not there "on business," one does not take notes and make excerpts. Let me however record here, that once in Sicily I came upon a century-old Italian school-book containing intelligent remarks upon metric. It was probably G. Biagioli's *Trattato d'Armonia di Verso Italiano* (Palermo 1836), with references to the *Elementi di Poesia* of G. Gherardini. The author did not "lay down rules," he merely observed that Dante's hendecasyllables were composed of combinations of rhythm units of various shapes and sizes and that these pieces were put together in lines so as to make, roughly, eleven syllables in all. I say "roughly" because of the liberties allowed in elision. I had discovered this fact for myself in Indiana twenty years before and in my own work had made use of the knowledge continually, but I wish to salute Messrs Biagioli and Gherardini.

This system represented versification when it was in a healthy state, when *moz* had not been divorced from *son* and before the sonnet had got in its dirty work.

Historically the sonnet, the "little tune," had already in Guido's day, become a danger to composition. It marks an ending or at least a decline of metric invention. It marks the beginning of the divorce of words and music. Sonnets with good musical setting are rare. The spur to the musician is slight. The monotony of the 14 even lines as compared to the constantly varying strophes of Ventadour or of Arnaut: the vocal heaviness of the hendecasyllable unrelieved by a shorter turn are all blanketing impediments for the music. This is not to say that the unrelieved hendecasyllable is impossible, and Dante, seeking the difficult, is

quite right to set the canzone in unrelieved hendecasyllables as the grand boggy of technical mastery.

Guido as we here observe, and as Dante had observed before us:

*rithimorum repercussionem frequenter videtur assumptum.*

He keeps the sound sharp and light in the throat by the rhymes inside the long line. Even some of the best Provençals, using a strophe of half his length, are unable to keep this cantabile virtue. All of which is probably a matter for specialists who will not be content with any general statement but will want to compare sound by sound the actual examples of mastersong that *totam artem comprehendunt*.

But one owes it to the general reader to jab his curiosity as to the degree of sonorous art, one might almost say of concrete or material sonority, required in this exposition of a general theme, in the case of the Donna Mi Prega; and of its relativity to the sonnet.

Of the great songs one remembers, that is songs sung with music, from Ierusalem Mirabilis to Le Pauvre Laboureur, and from that to Debussy's settings of Charles d'Orléans, does one remember a sonnet? And if so, how many?

The Canzone, any canzone, is obviously in intention a *capo lavoro*, a consummation of *métier*. Perhaps no poet has left half a dozen, or shall we say that Dante and Arnaut Daniel alone have left half a dozen each, that any one can remember? If I exaggerate, I do not exaggerate very greatly.

Of Guido this one survives undisputed. There is one inferior canzone ascribed to him; there is a strophe of another (Poiche di Doglia); and there is, I should be inclined to sustain, a *chance* of his having written the first strophe, though certainly not the entire, canzone to Fortune.

Apart from the Donna Mi Prega, Guido's reputation rests largely on the ballate, more or less his own field. That is to say, for purposes of song he chose a lighter and freer form, *not* the sonnet. In the ballata the first lobe is *not* immediately re-echoed. Tradition is that the ballata is made from popular dance-song, a scrap of folk-song caught up for the beauty of its tune, or for



some felicity, and then made into an art-form, more emotional and more emotive than the form of the Italian canzone.

Note that by A. D. 1290 the sonnet is already ceasing to be lyric, it is already the epistle without a tune, it is in a state of becoming, and tends already to oratorical pronunciamiento.

The strophes of canzoni are perforce symmetrical as the musical composition is only one fifth or one sixth the length of the verbal composition and has to be repeated. I don't believe we can prove complete absence of modulation; or that in case of canzone in tenzone one should assume impossibility of answer to tonic from dominant. Neither do we know what happened to the tune of the sestina while the recurrence-scheme was performing its evolution; the six units of the tune may, and in the case of Arnaut's *Oncle ed Ongla* could very well, have followed the permutation. The aesthetic of the carry-through of one rhyme-scheme from strophe to strophe is of Provençal not of Tuscan composition.

We know something of twelfth-century music, or have at least some grounds for particular conjecture, graphs, that is, of pitch sequence for some two hundred melodies; we are without any such comparable guide for "Dante and his Circle." I know of no manuscript containing music of that particular period; the one "item" in the Siena *archivio* is not a fragment of melody, but two lines of police record: Casella, juggled for being out after Curfew.

But considering the finesse of some of the Limousin melodies there is nothing to prevent our conjecture that the decadence of verbal mastery in Italian poetry may have paced a parallel decline in the melodic component. This would apply to the perfection of the single line or the "snatch" of song; to the close fit of word and melody, but not presumably to the whole form of the music. One may summarize the phases of development of the canzone as follows:

1. Strophe with few terminal sounds, sometimes only two, often no more than four sounds, repeated throughout the poem, meaning that the same rhyme wd. occur 18, or 24 times in the poem, or even more. After a century or so this grew monotonous, and we have
2. Use of *rimas escarsas* which may mean either the hunting up

of less usual terminal sounds, or the spacing out of the rhymes. In Arnaut's *L'Aura Amara*, we have 14 different rhyme sounds only 3 of which repeat inside the strophe, eleven of them repeat only from one strophe to the rest, that is occur only six or seven times in the poem.

3. Abandonment of the carry-through from one strophe to another. Arnaut had omitted carry-through in *Can Chai la Fuoilla*. Here in Guido's canzone 8 different sounds form the pattern inside the strophe; 5 occur 4 times, and 3 twice.

To be well done this patterning must lighten, not clog the movement, either of sense or sound.

As to the atrocities of my translation, all that can be said in excuse is that they are, I hope, for the most part intentional, and committed with the aim of driving the reader's perception further into the original than it would without them have penetrated. The melodic structure is properly indicated—and for the first time—by my disposition of the Italian text, but even that firm indication of the rhyme and the articulation of the strophe does not stress *all* the properties of Guido's triumph in sheer musicality.

One must strive, almost at any cost, to avoid a sort of mealy mumbling almost universally tolerated in English. If english verse undulates the average ear tolerates it, or even welcomes it though the undulation be but as a wobble of bread-dough, utterly incantabile, even when not wholly unspeakable.

I have not given an english "equivalent" for the *Donna Mi Prega*; at the utmost I have provided the reader unfamiliar with old Italian, an instrument that may assist him in gauging *some* of the qualities of the original.

NOTE: All this is not so unconnected with our own time as might seem. Those writers to whom *vers libre* was a mere "runnin' dahn th' road" videlicet escape, and who were impelled thereto by no inner need of, or curiosity concerning, the quantitative element in metric; having come to the end of that lurch, lurch back not into experiment with the Canzone or any other unexplored form, but into the stock and trade sonnet.



A DRAWING. BY JAN MATULKA





A DRAWING. BY JAN MATULKA

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## THE VENUS

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

**W**HAT then is it like, America?

It was Fräulein von J. talking.

They were on their way to take the train to Frascati, the three of them—she, her companion, and Evans.

In reply, he shook his head, laughing—and they hurried on to catch the car.

She could speak English well enough, her companion could not, Dev's German was spasmodic coming in spurts for a moment or two but disappearing as suddenly leaving him tongue-tied. So they spoke English and carried their lunch. A picnic. He was delighted.

This day it was hot. Fräulein von J. seemed very simple, very direct, and to his Roman mood miraculously beautiful. In her unstylish long-sleeved German clothes, her rough stockings and heavy walking-shoes, Evans found her, nevertheless, ethereally graceful. But the clear features, the high forehead, the brilliant perfect lips, the well-shaped nose, and best of all the shining mist-like palegold hair unaffectedly drawn back—frightened him. For himself he did not know where to begin. But she looked at him so steadily for some strange reason, as if she recognized him, that he was forced at last to answer her.

The tram was packed to the doors with passengers. Just before starting three treelike Englishwomen had come rushing up calling out distractedly in English that the tram must not go, that somebody was coming—Do you see her? Oh, what can have happened? She had the correct information, et cetera—until finally Clara arrived just in the moment of the tram's departure and clambered aboard desperately, not a minute too soon. So that now they stood in the aisles, the four of them, sweating and glowering at the Italian men, who oblivious to such violence had long since comfortably settled themselves in their seats.

Fräulein von J. was placed immediately before Evans looking at him absorbedly like a child. Not knowing what else to do or to say, he too looked (as the tram went through some bare vineyards)



straight back into her clear blue eyes with his evasive dark ones. She lifted her head a little as if startled, flushed (he thought) just a trifle but did not change her gaze. So they continued, to look fixedly among the backs and across the coats of the Englishwomen in the aisle, who were jabbering away disturbedly about the threatening weather. She did not stir to look away but seemed to rest upon his look with mild curiosity and no nervousness at all. It was, as usual, his look which faltered.

Hearing the talk of the Villa this and the Villa that, about to be visited, Evans felt that he wished he could lose this crowd and was more than pleased when Fräulein von J. suggested that as soon as they should get to Frascati they head for the open country, delighted to find that her mood suited his own so well.

At the market place of Frascati, where a swarm of guides and carriages swooped down upon them, the three picnickers moved off at right angles to the direction taken by the rest, up a road that led between two walls around behind the town. They did not know where they were or indeed anything about the place or its beauties—they didn't care. Fräulein wanted to see the Italian springtime, that was the most definite of their spoken desires and Dev, sick of antiquities and architectural beauties, was more than willing to follow. The companion disliked Italian gardens anyway, lacking as they do the green profusion of the northern trees. With this they started, beginning at once to see violets along inside the fences, violets they could not reach. Following a brook which ran beside them, contrariwise down the hill, they tramped on, heading for open country.

What is it like, America? And so Dev began to tell her—Not like this—and all the time somehow he was thinking of his sister. Where is Bess? I wish she were here! till walking and talking, leaving the town behind them, they came quite out into the fields with a hill on the left and a little village off in the distance across the valley before them. They were in a worn dirt gully high hedged on both sides with banks cut into narrow paths by goats' hoofs. Before them four absorbed children gathering violets rushed forward in the path by ones and twos rivalling each other in their efforts to pounce upon the finer groups of flowers.

The children paid no attention whatever to the three hikers,

not even by so much as one glance. Running ahead with cries of delight, each racing to exceed the others, they soon disappeared through gaps in the hedge. Evans was over and over startled by the German girl's delicate colouration and hair and eyes. Also, her hands were lovely, her ankles, firm—like the Venus, thicker than the stage or dance-hall type, but active too—just suggestive enough of the peasant to be like a god's.

You have not told me yet, what it is like, America.

It is like, Dev began, something muffled—like a badly trained voice. It is a world where no man dare learn anything that concerns him intimately—but sorrow—for should we learn pleasure, it is instantly and violently torn from us as by a pack of hungry wolves so starved for it are we and so jealous of each of us is our world.

I think I know what you mean, she replied, it is that we are all good citizens on top and very much better than that inside. It makes me think of the *Johannesfeuer*. You know Sudermann's play?

America is a pathetic place where something stupefying must always happen for fear we wake up. Yes, I have read the play.

By this time they had come quite around behind Frascati hill. Here they had lunch in a diminutive, triangular grove of oaks where there was a grassy bank with a few daisies on it, and the tall trees bending overhead. Then climbing through a fence they took the road again up to the right around the hill climbing steeply now on a stony path. It was a hard walk this part of the way and before long they were tired, especially Frau M. who was glad to stop near the top and rest.

But after a few words in German which Dev missed, Fräulein von J. cried, Come on! and they two went on alone about two hundred yards ahead up to the woody summit, to a place from which they could see Frau M. below them lying under an ash-tree. Here there were a few stones of some ancient construction almost gone under the wood soil and rotted chestnut leaves. It was a chestnut grove cut and counter cut by innumerable paths which led north over the brow of the hill—to Frascati, no doubt. But now at this early season, the place was deserted. The random, long, dart-shaped dry leaves covered the ground all about them,

two foreigners resting on the old stones. Elsa waved to Frau M. from where she sat, then she turned again to Evans, Tell me what you are. You do not mind? I want to know everything. What is America? It is perhaps you?

No, Dev shook his head.

Is it something to study? What will it do? Shall we go there to learn? she asked in rapid succession.

Dev shook his head.

But you will return to it?

Yes.

Why?

Habit.

No, it is something.

It is that I may the better hide everything that is secretly valuable in myself, or have it defiled. So safety in crowds—

But that is nothing. That is the same as in Europe.

America seems less encumbered with its dead. I can see nothing else there. It gives less than Europe, far less of everything of value save more paper to write upon—nothing else. Why do you look at me so? Dev asked her.

Because I have seen no one like you in my life, few Americans, I have talked to none. I ask myself, are you an American?

And if I am—

Then it is interesting.

He said, To me it is a hard, barren life, where I am "alone" and unmolested (work as I do in the thick of it) though in constant danger lest some slip send me to perdition but which, being covetous not at all, I enjoy for the seclusion and primitive air of it. But that is all—unless I must add an attraction in all the inanimate associations of my youth, shapes, foliage, trees to which I am used—and a love of place and the characteristics of place—good or bad, rich or poor.

No, she continued, it is not that.

Evans felt at that moment, that there was very little in America. He wanted to be facetious but the girl's seriousness was not a thing to be fooled. It made him pensive and serious himself.

He could say—that it was just a place.

But you must not tell me that America is nothing, she anticipated him, for I see it is something, and she looked at him again

with her little smile. You seem to me a man like I have not seen before. This is America?

I am a refugee, Dev continued, America is or was a beginning, to clean out the—

Then, she replied, it is as in Germany. I did not think so when I saw you.

And I, Dev answered, did not think so when I saw you.

Why am I in Rome, do you think? she queried next.

He did not know.

To become a nun.

And with a shock he remembered the German youths in their crimson gowns whom he had seen filing down the Quirinal, down the long steps; the Scotch youths playing soccer in the Borghese Gardens Sunday afternoon with their gowns tucked up, or doffed, garters showing and running like college athletes for the ball. He remembered too, the Americans with the blue edge to their gowns, the Spanish, the French.

Yes, she continued, that is it. I am in Rome to feel if the church will not offer me an answer. I was fourteen years old when the war ended. I have seen the two things—to throw myself away or to take hold again. I have seen the women running in the stadiums, I have seen them together. If we were peasants, we could be nearer—but we must lose it all, all that is good. I am a German, an East Prussian. My mother is dead. My father is a general—of course. What shall I do? I do not want anything—Tell me what is America. You must say. Is it just a place to work?

Dev nodded.

You see that I am young—I am young, of course. You come to me carrying a message. I do not know what to do. I believe you will tell me. I am not a fool—and I am not gifted either. There is nothing for me. Is there? I cannot walk about letting my hair loose to surprise men because it is so yellow. You perhaps, yes, if you please—and she smiled—but not those whom I do not want. I cannot marry. It makes me sick to marry. But I want, I want. I do not care that I am a virgin or not. No. No. That is childish. I cannot remain as I am—but I must—until this (and she tapped her forehead) is satisfied. You have said something to me. What do I say to you?

Dev thought "running wild" that if they should do as he wished they would both end that night in the jail at Frascati hungry and very much disturbed—possibly—but no more than that. Fool.

They speak to me of my body. It is beautiful. For what? Of what use to me?

She talked quite coolly.

Within a few years I must lose this. Why not? and I have nothing else unless it is a mind to have, to have and nothing that I want. Not painting, not music, philosophy, tennis—for old men, for young men, for women? No. America, that seems something new.

You would find nothing in America, Evans quickly interposed. The girls there cannot go half a mile out of town for fear a negro might rape them, or their complexions be spoiled by the weather or the Japanese come too close or they be buried in snow or baked in summer; or they marry their business managers or secretaries and live together two or three in apartments. Their thoughts are like white grass so heavily have they been covered by their skins—and so heavily covered are they to protect them from the weather that when they are uncovered they do not exist. One must snatch another up quickly from the general supply, from a patent container.—Evans was ashamed of this speech of which as a fact *Fräulein von J.* understood not one word. But the few women he had admired were not pretty and the pretty ones he did not admire.—Never think of America, he concluded. The men are worse than the women.

Are you then one?

Evans had no reply.

When I saw you, I saw something unusual, I am never mistaken. I saw something different from what I see every day, neither throwing away nor taking hold to the old horrible handle, all filthy—Is it America I asked, but you tell me nothing. It is because you will not do so.

America, he began again haltingly, is hard to know.

Yes, she answered, because she had made him serious so that he must speak his mind or say nothing.

I think it is useful to us, he continued, because it is near savagery. In Europe, you are so far from it that maybe you will have to die first before you will live again.—But Dev was not such a fool.—

Europe, I do not know, he corrected himself. I am seeing a few superficial moments only.

But he had a quick pupil.—That is enough, replied *Fräulein von J.* I see now what I saw at the beginning. You are a savage, not quite civilized—you have America and we have not. You have that, yes it is something.

It is very difficult, said Dev. I am not a typical American. We have a few natives left but they would not know me—

You are holding on to something, she said.

It is very difficult, Dev went on—something very likely to be lost, this is what—So he took out the flint arrowhead he had in his pocket and showed it to her.

She was impressed. She held it hard in her hand as if to keep its impression there, felt the point, the edge, tried it, turned it over.

Yes, she said, I have seen the same thing from our own fields, more finished work—but it is very far, very far. No one believes it is real. But this you carry in your coat? It is very strange. Where did you find it?

In a corn-field in Virginia, there are many of them there.

Are there many Americans who know this that you are saying?

Dev shook his head. I have seen but a few. There are pictures pressed into my mind, which have a great power of argument. Summer pictures mostly, of my part of the country, one of the old pioneer houses fast to the ground. There is nothing like them in Europe. They were not peasants, the people who built them, they were tragic men who wasted their wits on the ground—but made a hard history for me—not for me only, I think; they were like all the earlier peoples but it has been so quick and misplaced in America, this early phase, that it is lost or misinterpreted—its special significance.

You think then it might be useful to—me? Yes, that was what I saw in your eyes.—She looked again. Yes, it is so.

She shook her head gently from side to side in marvelling realization. Come, she said, I was right. What an America is that! Why then did you not look at me all this week? I was troubled. I wondered what was the matter with me.

Dev said he had been excited studying something he wanted among the antiquities.

But a feeling almost of terror, Dev thought, mixed with com-



passion perhaps, came now into her eyes as she continued to look at him.

It must be even more lonesome and frightening in America than in Germany, she said. She shook her head. She seemed as if looking off into a new country and to be feeling the lonesomeness of it.

America is marvellous, replied Dev, grossly prosperous—

She shuddered, No. So were we. So will we be soon again.—She was frightened.—How can you stay where you are? Why do you stay there? You make the church impossible—but you are alone. I will pray for you.

They started to get up quietly from their serious mood and were rather startled to find themselves still in the surroundings of this pagan grove. Not too sure were they that they knew each other as well as they had been feeling they did for the few moments of hard sympathetic understanding just past, projecting themselves out; each feeling, each trying hard, to get at the other's mood. They laughed, and Dev gave her his hand but she did not move away.

It is very difficult, she said, for us to support ourselves after we have passed the semi-consciousness of the peasant, and his instinct. We fall back, do we not? You are brave, she said, to want to find some other way—and one that is American. It seems curious to me.

Moving to rejoin Frau M. they saw that it was getting on into the afternoon and that they must be stepping along if they would be back in Rome by nightfall.

You believe in America like a church, mused Fräulein von J. almost to herself.

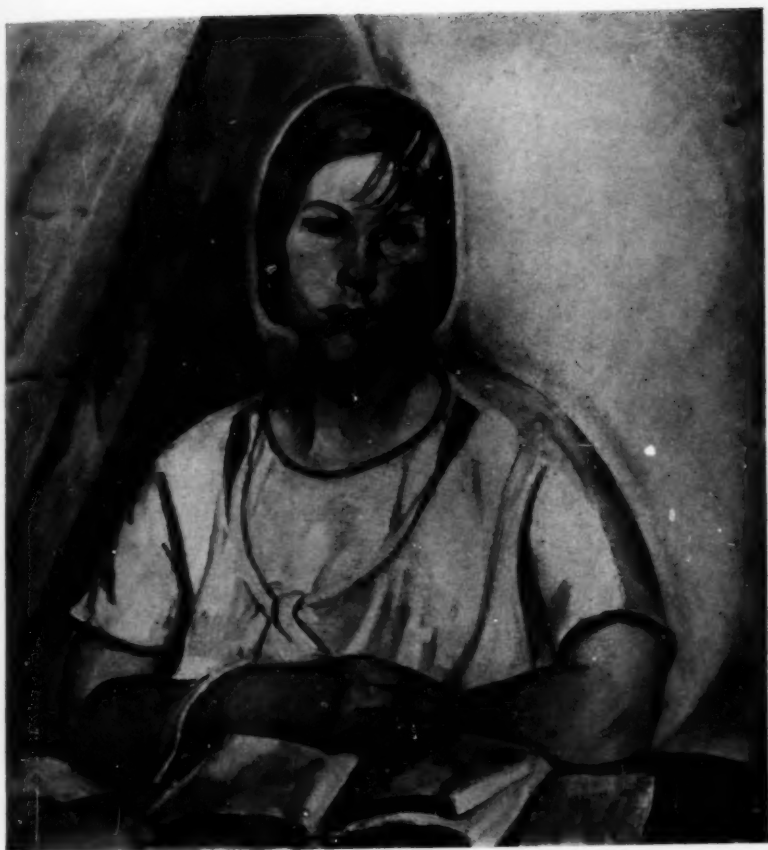
Dev did not think so.

Do you believe then that the church is an enemy to your belief? Yes.

She looked away.

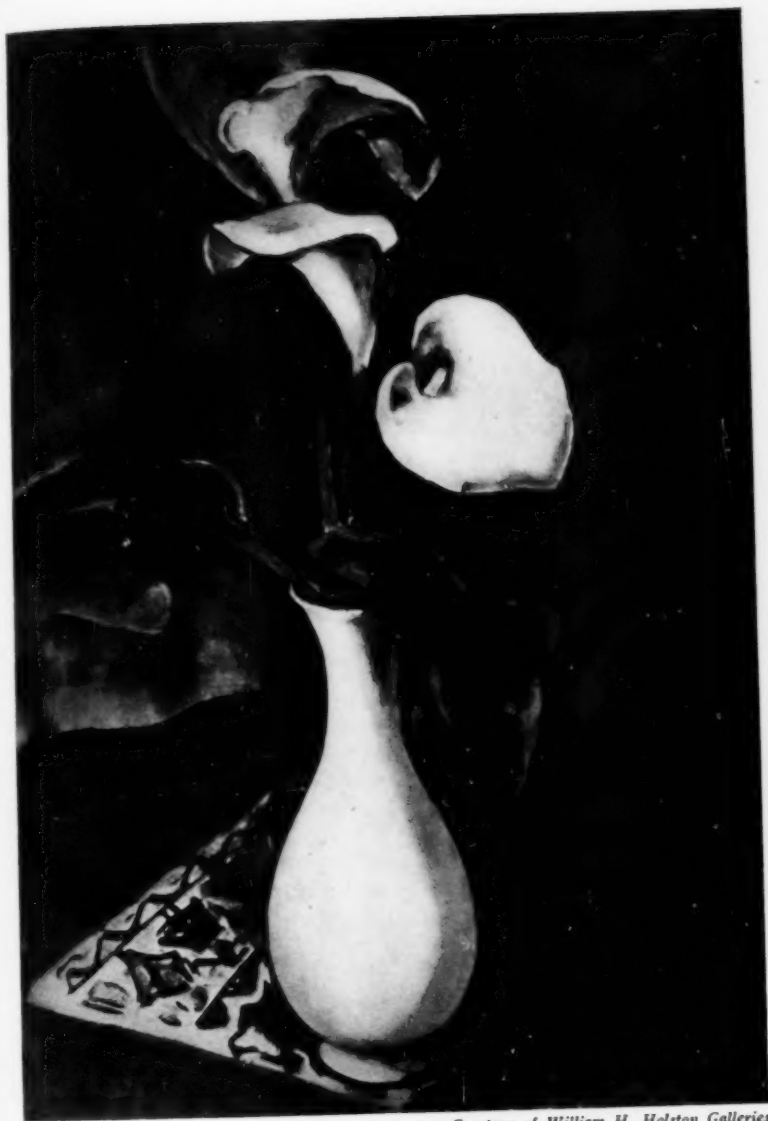
Oh come on, said Dev, let's get out of this.





PORTRAIT. BY KATHLEEN McENERY





*Courtesy of William H. Holston Galleries*

STILL-LIFE. BY KATHLEEN McENERY



## THREE POEMS

BY CARL JOHN BOSTELMANN

### FOUR O'CLOCK RESOLUTION

I have just discovered  
There is a symphony  
Of molecules  
Even as there is  
A music of spheres!  
I have just been told  
By someone—  
I forget whom—  
There are ears,  
Other than those of men,  
Which can hear  
Automatically  
And without effort  
Those harmonies of sound  
Inaudible  
To men!

Something should be done  
About this!

Will not someone—  
I don't care who—  
Any person of vision—  
Please put this  
In the form  
Of a motion?

### TWO BLIND BOYS WALKED TOGETHER

Two blind boys walked together down Eighth Avenue  
In their darkness.  
One carried a cane in his right hand,

## THREE POEMS

The crooked elbow of his free arm locked tightly  
Like the link of a chain through the crooked elbow-link  
Of the other.

One had once had eyes for seeing.  
He carried his cane jauntily  
Like a gentleman on Easter morning.  
The other had been born with dead eyes,  
Like a mole into a world of unseen shapes.  
His was a crooked right arm curved  
Like a chain link.

As they walked together in step,  
One's mind told him he walked too slowly.  
The other's mind warned he walked  
Too rapidly.

One smiled—a deep, internal, silent smile  
It was—as they paraded down Eighth Avenue  
Past the flaming, sight-arresting window signs  
Along the sidewalk. He had once known colour.  
He had known the spectrum one time.  
His heavy-lidded companion clutched the free arm's elbow  
Desperately. He had never known.  
He trusted.

Two blind boys walked down Eighth Avenue  
Together in their darkness.

## I HAVE WET MY FEET IN MANY WATERS

I, who love many things  
But who love wading as I do few other things,  
Have wet my feet in many waters.

Ankle-deep in the lacy fringe,  
The blue of the Atlantic  
I have wandered,

Within my bathing woolens  
Like a sandwichman  
Between his signs.

From the Cliff House, where surges  
Leap high to spray the seals basking on the rocks,  
I have followed an old trail  
Around the shore, almost to the Presidio,  
Because I knew combers burst white,  
Boiling with vigour, exploding with riot, at Land's End  
Where my feet could dangle in the turmoil.

At the brink of Niagara,  
At the trough to oblivion,  
I have extended my feet to the water.

At the base of the precipice, at the bottom  
Where green masses plunge to crash—  
Down, down, deep down—  
I have stood on the drenched rocks,  
Saturated with rain from the collision of waters.  
Five feet from the thunder, I have stood on the rocks  
Barefoot.

On rivers and lakes I have ridden in boats,  
And straddled the bow, like a figurehead,  
My feet dragging against old, old waters,  
Little currents eddying between my toes  
As between twigs of a fallen tree in a spring flood.

I have wet my feet in many waters.

## AN APPROACH TO AMERICA

BY STEWART MITCHELL

**D**URING the past year M Siegfried, possibly at the will of God, has granted to all intelligent Americans, the pious wish of Burns, with the amusing consequence of general satisfaction at the result. But the immediate aim of this shrewd Alsatian was to explain the United States to France—socially, politically, and commercially—and describe the shift of the centre of "Anglo-Saxon" power from Great Britain into North America. Whatever has been the effect of his old and accurate knowledge of us on the French, the immense sale of the translation of his book has been only a secondary success. The purpose of Mr Morison's *The Oxford History of the United States*,<sup>1</sup> if not quite parallel, is similar, comparatively: occupant for two years of the visitors' chair of American history at Oxford, the author found the leisure and perspective he needed for his work, a history of the United States primarily for English readers. The substance of these two volumes is two years of lectures to audiences of English students; the mere American can only feel that Oxford has used the Harmsworth foundation to advantage.

In the first place, the international effect of this history is apt to be important, for however world-wide the British are at building up empires and trade, they can be amazingly insular at reading books—some absurdity like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is more than likely to settle their notions for a generation, and all to the greater confusion of wise men and good women. Even Mr Asquith was for ever being startled by the back-fire of American hostility toward England. It is to be wondered whether a specimen explanation, such as the following, will open any eyes:

"Mr. Roosevelt once remarked that no American, save himself, was free from hereditary bias towards England. That this should be so is puzzling to Englishmen—perhaps their own attitude toward Rome may illustrate it. The Church of England has come out from Rome much as the United States separated from the

<sup>1</sup> *The Oxford History of the United States—1783-1917.* By Samuel Eliot Morison. Two volumes. 10mo. Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$10.



British Empire. In both cases the old association continues to exercise attraction or repulsion. Few members of the Church of England can regard Rome with the same detachment as they do the Orthodox Church, or Islam. Similarly, some Americans worship their English ancestors; others are deeply and unreasonably suspicious of British policy."

If ever the English are to lead captive their captors (and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand must go one way or another some day) they will meditate as Mr Morison, and imitate Sir Auckland Geddes and the Earl of Balfour.

With much of the statement of fact in these volumes the present reviewer is not equipped to quarrel, even if he were to feel so disposed. Many of the errors are obvious to Americans and most of them are unimportant to any one but specialists. Beginning with a survey of the country at the time of the legal separation of 1783, the author carries his story on to the catastrophe of 1917, the land's end of liberalism. From a professional point of view, of course, these books are not well balanced, for they deal largely with persons, with politics, and with wars; no one has said they want interest. Only remoteness over miles of salt water could have steeled a modern historian to the courage of saving so great space for campaigns and characters. Mr Morison's pen-portraits are invariably lucky and long-lived, and his *Battle of the Seven Days*, for example, is the first clear account of that action one of his readers has found, so far.

As to what reviewers are accustomed to call style, Mr Morison is always easy and not infrequently fine—now and then he is even flippant, but seldom except when the treatment of a subject calls for fresh air. And amid all this distinction of language one finds the old-fashioned New England conscience hard at work, repairing reputations ruined unjustly and pulling wooden idols off their pedestals. John Adams, Jefferson Davis, and McClellan deserve to flourish, if only in fame; Webster ought to sit down to his grain of salt with Hamilton and Grover Cleveland, but Aaron Burr still has ground for complaint. This man's "bad press," indeed, is one of the pranks of American history: at the long last he was of more favourable effect than Sumner, for instance. And Lincoln certainly deserves less praise and more discrimination than Mr Morison awards him—he himself would be the first to rub his eyes at a deification not only desperate but dangerous. Even a great man makes a little god.

When the author descends to the market place of social and economic history, he walks through quickly as if he were in a hurry to be home again with his heroes. Just there the comparison with the work of the Beards is interesting: although the points of emphasis are different, neither history is strewn with statistics. Readers are obstinate and sensitive beasts, in spite of what scholars may hope for, and the clatter and clutter of figures bewilders them. A comparison of Arkansas and Michigan between 1836 and 1850, in the second volume, is an excellent example of the art of numbers. Certainly Mr Morison has done his best to avoid that pet vice of the professions, neglecting the amateur for the pleasure of the specialist.

In appearance these two volumes are distinguished, although why the binders of the American edition saw fit to cut down the margins of their issue, remains a mystery. The maps are plentiful, clear, convenient, and instructive; the select bibliography is ample, and the critical comments are economical and accurate. In this business of valuing the scholarship of books by other men, as well as in the text of his own, Mr Morison is pleasantly free of that curious and almost chronic provincialism that has made too much of American history a kind of gospel according to the Yankees. Self-esteem may be a complex in the individual; in whole communities it is invariably a mechanism of defence against suspicion of decay. But only hostile localists obsessed with the importance of other sections of the country, will find any trace of this taint in the Oxford History.

The real charm, the power, perhaps, of this history is the author's sense of the dramatic and his feeling for persons. Not only are three wars followed in detail and with gusto, but the great Congressional debates preceding the Secession are recovered with action and colour; the pages on the Age of Andrew Jackson are filled with all the flourishes and fictions of that time. The phraseology of this book, the epithets, the anecdotes, the incidental remarks, are usually good and not infrequently unforgettable, although here and there some readers may find certain translations into insular English excessively painstaking. Understatement and sarcasm add sophistication to these pages, even if Mr Morison cannot yet equal Mr Channing at the art of putting unpleasant facts politely. Readers can enjoy their week or two with these books; having spent their time well, few will find reason to feel homesick for history.



L'ÉCRASÉ. BY FRANS MASEREEL.

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## ROOTS

BY JOSEPH GAER

**T**HE grass was yellow from lack of rain and beyond the lawn, on the other side of the dilapidated fence, the garden was baking in the heat. If it did not rain soon there would be no tomatoes nor cabbage for the winter, and no corn for the chickens and cows. Anna sighed.

Buster lay at the entrance from the kitchen to the cellar with his eyes closed and his head on the door-step. Anna wished that she too could find a cool spot to rest in, but the white cherries had to be canned or they would spoil. She sat on a low stool before a pail of them, a pail of water, and a large basin. She picked up a handful of cherries, dipped it in the murky water, inspected it hurriedly for wormy fruit, then threw her palm open into the basin.

Buster raised his head suddenly and growled, then rose lazily, and began to bark as he trotted out of the kitchen. From behind the wagon-house beyond the yard, came the crunching sound of light wheels on cinders. Anna rose with difficulty and walked into the yard, wiping her hands on her apron as she waited for her husband to drive up to the house. She could see that David Fishbein was with him, and she came a little nearer to the gate.

"Well, well! I'm back again, Mrs Burnstein," David called from the high seat of the little wagon.

That was his unfailing greeting every year.

"I'm glad you are, Mr Fishbein!" Anna answered and wiped her forehead.

Her husband, Harry, and their yearly visitor, David, got off the wagon and unloaded the packages. Anna held the gate open for them. When they had entered the house, she still remained near the gate looking vacantly at the blue sky shimmering against the horizon. Harry came out of the kitchen with a handful of cherries.

"Any mail?" Anna asked, as she always asked when Harry returned from town.

"No," he replied sulkily, as if she had blamed him for the world's neglect.

Still swinging the cherries into his ready mouth one by one, Harry led away the horse and wagon. Anna returned to her task; now that the work had been broken she hated to resume it; but it had to be done or the cherries would spoil.

David came down into the kitchen from his room upstairs in overalls, a blue shirt, and heavy boots. The first thing he did on arriving for his two weeks' stay on the farm was to change his city clothes for overalls, and he kept on wearing them till he had to leave.

"Whew! It's hot!" he exclaimed as he slumped into a chair near the table.

"Must be awful in New York!" Anna half-asked, half-affirmed, minimizing their discomfort by comparing it with the city's greater discomfort. Then she sighed and added: "Would you like to have something to eat?"

"No, thank you! I had my dinner just before Harry met me at the station."

"Then have some cherries."

David took a few cherries, inspected them as if they were for sale, and began to eat them critically.

"These cherries somehow are never as good as the cherries at home," David remarked.

"At home" meant the little Bessarabian village from which he had come to New York twenty years before.

"No, somehow they aren't," Anna agreed.

"And where are the children?" David asked.

"Ben and Willie are working again in the porcelain factory in town, and Babe is over at the Nieces."

Buster came into the kitchen and settled again in the cellarway, the coolest spot in the house. David looked at him—a shaggy collie—and remarked that he was getting old.

"Just a nuisance," Anna said and yawned.

"And how is Dick?"

"Dick?" Anna raised her eyes, puzzled.

"He was sick when I left last year."

"Oh, that horse is always getting into trouble!" After a pause she added: "He's all right now."

There was nothing else to talk about and they were silent.

David rose and said, "Well, I guess I'll go out and see what the place looks like."

Anna stopped work for a few minutes; her eyes followed him. She knew where he was going. Going to see his trees.

He paused in front of the house and looked down the slope. He noticed that the hay was not yet cut and was pleased, for he liked to cut hay. That was really why he took his vacation early in July. He walked across the familiar farm-yard, observing the untidy woodpile near the brooder-house, then made his way to the little orchard where the trees were.

He had been coming to the farm for his vacation every summer for more than ten years, and once during the third or fourth vacation had planted in the neglected orchard four apple-trees and one pear-tree. He had planted them with his own hands and had carried manure for them from the barn in an old discarded pan. And every day of those two weeks he had watered them with care. They had been planted out of season, but they took root, and three of them, two apples and the pear, had survived the winter. The next year his heart was filled with joy at the sight of the thriving young trees, and after that the place of his summer's rest was determined by immutable law. After helping Anna in the garden, or fixing the pasture fence for Harry, David would come by the little orchard and stop to look at his trees, marvelling at their size. Marvelling as a father might at the realization that his daughters have grown tall and lovely beyond words. When in bloom, Babe told him, they were the prettiest things on earth. David knew he would never see them in May because they didn't cut hay till July and because his employer would not let him go so early. But when the sun went down and Harry went to milk the cows, David would watch the sunset through the branches of his trees. And there he sometimes wondered how it was that in a life where one moment of joy can cause so much regret and one moment of pain can cause one to forget both death and life, there should be so much pleasure in the presence of a tree one calls one's own.

As he walked through the parched weeds and grass he looked at his heavy boots and overalls and thought how good it was to be



away from the store and from dry-goods and from women-customers and the life that was life to him in New York. Suddenly something fell softly on him. He brushed his palm nervously against the back of his neck and noticed a yellow and green caterpillar fall to the ground. Looking up at the nearest tree, he saw huge nests of chrysalises supported at the crutches of the branches, and the twigs heavy with caterpillars. The leaves on the tree were eaten clear through and spotted on the back. He hurried to his own trees and walked around them anxiously. They too had been stricken!

"Hello, Mr Fishbein!" a young voice shouted from the road beyond the orchard.

"Hello, Ethel!" David shouted back and waved his hand.

Ethel, whom the family still called Babe though she was nearly fourteen, came across the field to him. She was a lanky girl with a long neck and small head that made one think of a young camel. And as she walked her bare knees touched each other.

Ethel grinned happily as she came near. To her the arrival of David on the farm was always a great event. During his stay he gave her more attention than she received during the rest of the year. And he always brought her little gifts because she promised to take care of his trees.

"What's happened to the trees?" David asked her.

"No rain," Ethel answered simply. "If we don't have rain soon there's goin' t'be no corn neither. There's goin' t'be hell t'pay, Mr Niece just said."

David looked at his trees, then asked pleadingly, "Is there nothing one can do to save them?"

"I donno."

In the evening visitors came to the house as they always did when they knew of David's arrival. Sam Leibowitz, the tailor, came from town with his entire family, to visit the Burnsteins and welcome their guest. Sam, who was a permanent subscriber to the *Morgen Journal* and often went to New York to make purchases for the little store that he kept in conjunction with his tailor shop, felt greatly superior to the three Jewish farmers of the vicinity. He conversed freely and readily on all world events, and at home in his front room he had a bookcase full of books in



sets. His business in town had succeeded to the extent of a bank account and an automobile, a Buick. Sam felt superior to the Jewish farmers of the vicinity, but his was the only Jewish family in a town hostile to Jews, and he was driven to associate with the farmers. And the farmers associated with him and with each other more out of necessity than from choice. Each in turn found a sufficient cause for feeling superior to the other, that of Aaron Stein, Harry's neighbour, dating back a hundred years to a time when his great-grandfather was a *Rov* (religious leader) in a little village in Poland. When David came, however, they all congregated after the day's work to welcome him.

They were sitting on the wide veranda stairs watching the fire-flies down the slope of the hill where the darkness began to swell like a transparent mist.

"What then, it doesn't rain much in the city neither?" Aaron asked David.

"What a question!" Sam mocked. "If it doesn't rain here it doesn't rain there!"

"I don't know what we'll do if it keeps up much longer," Aaron whistled between his missing teeth. "It's fifteen years now that I've been farming in New Jersey and I haven't seen a summer like this."

"You say that every summer," Sam objected.

"How is your well, Aaron?" Harry asked suddenly.

"Why?"

"Our spring is almost dry," Anna explained.

"If you need water for cooking come and get it," Aaron said sulkily.

"They say there's going to be another war soon between Russia and Japan," said Sam, trying to change the subject. "Now, if there's going to be a fight between the Russians and the Japanese again, it'll be ten times worse than the last war."

"Let them fight. Who cares?" Harry's youngest son, Ben, bit his hard fingernails and added: "If you had taken my advice last year, Dad, and dug an artesian well you wouldn't have to worry about water every summer."

Harry did not reply.

Anna rose from the steps with difficulty and entered the house to prepare tea and jam. The heat and the day's work had sapped

the energy from her worn body. All she wished was to lie down. But she had to offer tea and jam to her guests. She always did when they came to visit.

"Who wants tea on a hot night like this?" Sarah Leibowitz protested in her shrill voice. But the men filed into the large front room and seated themselves awkwardly around the large table. The smell of manure and varnish mingled with the broken talk of farm-problems as they drank hot tea. Aaron wiped his heavy brown moustache and handed his empty cup to Anna without a word. How she hated to get up and go to the kitchen again. But these were her guests.

David listened eagerly to the talk. Only the night before, he reflected, he had been sitting in his uncle's house in the Bronx listening to a lecture on marriage by his Aunt Rivkah. He had heard it so often it made no impression. He was glad to be away from home and from those lectures.

The talk around the table had turned on Jerusalem.

"I'd like to go there myself," said Sam with enthusiasm.

"What would you do in Palestine? Farm?" Aaron asked.

"Why should I farm? Do I farm here?" Sam's feelings were hurt. "Do you think all the Jews that go to Palestine go there to farm? If they all farmed they would have to go naked and barefoot. If we are going to rebuild Palestine, don't think it will be like it used to be! We'll make it the most modern place in the world. Only the other day I read in the paper how they are trying to put electricity all through Palestine."

"Palestine or no Palestine," said Ben and yawned, "I'm going to bed." And he went upstairs.

That was a signal for the others. Sam and his family were the last to leave. Finally the glaring eyes of his Buick swept the blackness of the entire horizon as it turned around the yard towards the road to town. Harry, Anna, and David stood near the gate watching the car leave the yard. A faint breeze rose. Harry wetted one finger and raised it above his head.

"It's from the east," he said. "I hope it'll bring rain."

David was the first to wake the next morning—disturbed by the cackling of chickens and crowing of roosters. He dressed lazily and went downstairs. Although the sun had barely risen,

the dense hot air was already hard to breathe. With Buster trailing behind, he sauntered to the orchard and walked around his trees like one visiting a sorrowing friend. The leaves teemed with insects and he noticed the trunk of the pear-tree was injured at the base where brownish sap had thickened on the wound. He walked away with lowered head, his hands clasped on his back. When the chickens saw him coming they raced expectantly to meet him.

"Why did you get up so early?" Harry asked as he came out of the house, blinking in the glare of sun.

"I just couldn't sleep!"

"Well, I think I'll be cutting hay to-day," Harry said, knowing how anxious David was to run the mower and the rake.

"That's good!" David responded eagerly, in anticipation of the fragrant work. But at breakfast, after Ben and Willie had gone, Anna reminded Harry that they were nearly out of water for the kitchen.

"Better drive over to Aaron's," Anna suggested.

"I'd rather get it from town," Harry said, and went to harness Dick into the flat wagon.

David gathered the rusty milk cans that were used in dry summers for water, and scoured them thoroughly.

"If you want to wash the cans better wait until you get to town," Anna reproached him amiably.

When they came to town they stopped to ask Sam Leibowitz if the paper predicted rain. Then they filled the cans with fresh water and started for home. By the time the water was put away in the shed near the kitchen and the horse unharnessed and watered, it was noon and Harry was tired. He decided to put off the hay-cutting. The next day, he hoped, would not be so hot.

But the next day was as hot, if not hotter. A week passed with the heat rising, it seemed. The hay was cut. Too little, Harry said, to be worth the bother. And mostly weed at that. But David enjoyed the cutting and raking; and the coat of tan that he took back each vacation was already tinting his face and neck. They went for water twice, and David helped to devise an ice-box made of rags and boxes. One evening he visited the Jewish neighbours, and there, over tea and jam, heard again their complaint against the Lord. Deep within him David felt a pleasing contentment—

contentment that he was dependent on an employer who paid with checks each week, rain or no rain.

David asked Harry whether the heat might kill the trees.

"To the devil with them! I'm worried about the corn!" Harry said with anger, and David never mentioned the trees again.

Every drop of water that was used Anna watched like a miser, and emptied the slop-pail on the plants in the garden. Once David found himself carrying the pail of used water to his trees. Then as he distributed it, instead, amongst the too numerous tomato plants he felt the joy of being unselfish and good. And the feeling persisted for a day or two.

The cloudless days continued until one morning the sky was overcast and Anna was radiant with the hope of rain. "Thank God," she said, "if it rains now it'll not be too late for the corn and the garden."

It did not rain all day and the following morning the ground was as dry as it had been. But the humidity had increased and the clouds were darker. David came down to breakfast in his city clothes and Anna and Harry looked at him as if he were already far away. He seemed to personify the city to them, the city that in envy they vaguely blamed for all their misfortunes on the farm.

After breakfast Harry brought the wagon to the door and the two men, with Babe between them on the seat, hurriedly drove to town. There David treated Babe to ice-cream and bought a box of candy for her.

"Here," he said softly, "and let me know how the trees do after the rain."

A drizzle began to spray the windows as the train raced through wide stretches of parched land. David had a newspaper in his hand, but his eyes were on the dwarfed corn in the fields, and the dreary squat farm-yards, and the distant trees that swerved by slowly with the passing of the train. The monotonous thudding of the wheels lulled the passengers to brooding silence. David looked calmly at the changing scene outside. The rain might last and the trees be saved. The trees might be saved, he thought calmly, but not with indifference.



THE ARTIST AND THE COWS. BY RUDOLF GROSSMANN



## IMAGE AND AFTER-IMAGE

BY S. FOSTER DAMON

Broad sea—broad sky—  
The sole perpendicular is I.  
Silence . . . but for the thin, incessant  
Sparkle and hiss on the long crescent  
Of beach that ends, as it began,  
Without one single trace of man.

Then I, too, will be naked of  
All civilized appurtenances!  
The only eye is the sun above:  
Off, clothes! from my suppressed physique!  
—O gigantic winds of these huge expanses,  
Vast air-serpents writhing across the sea,  
Come! cool these yet un-sunburned curves.  
Stripped, one is almost something Greek.  
(If one could but strip as easily  
From one's temperament the modern nerves!)

Nothing in Nature ever rankles;  
Yet a faint breeze responds. I stand  
On this rock that juts out like a shelf  
Just under water, and feel the bland  
Tide lifting and sinking about my feet.  
But look—! wavering from my ankles  
The scattered image of myself  
Flaps and bulges incomplete;  
Knees knock and bandy, head swells to rings,  
Corrupting the surface of the sea  
With visionary anatomy  
In most unGreek foreshortenings;  
While bits of sun skip round its head,  
Dancing nimbly, higher and higher,

## IMAGE AND AFTER-IMAGE

As though the summer ocean bred  
Enormous fleas of white fire.

The worm's-eye view.

—I can leap head-first

My skull meeting the watery skull,  
And in one delectable white burst  
Perform a curious miracle:  
Each telescoping the other's shape  
Into invisibility,  
Reappearing on the seascape  
As cool and clean as one can be.

(Even as at night, when blackness teems,  
I see my broken image tremble  
Upon the encroaching tide of dreams,  
Then flicker, bulge, and reassemble.

Brain-first against that shadowy brain  
Into the invisible I sink,  
Bursting back refreshed again  
Upon the morning's yellow brink.)

Well, it is time that I immerse  
My twin selves in oblivion.  
But first, before I shall dive in,  
I utter (Greek-like) to the Sun  
A prayer half jest, half genuine,  
Eye to eye with the universe.

The sun is hot to human gaze.  
Hail and farewell!—

I plunge—

emerge—

And blinded, cling to the weed-grown verge,  
A praiser dazzled by his praise!  
For a black sun blossoms in the skies  
And leaps to keep before my eyes.



## MODERN DRAMA<sup>1</sup>

BY WALDO FRANK

THE way of modern drama which is the way of *us*, grows intricately varied. Man is naked. His new inventions, physical and social, cover but do not allay his spiritual loneliness. His quest of principles and powers to make him whole . . . as Catholic Europe had once made him . . . drive him to many attitudes, credos, "isms": and most of them find expression of a sort in the drama. One manifest "way" is the "way back"—the return. Races and nations, thrown upon themselves, seek to recover health in re-experiencing their own mythic childhood. From Schiller to Hugo and Wagner and the modern folk theatres, this romantic necessity is potent; Rousseau's eulogy of natural man gives it its rationale. But in Germany and France, the return is sophisticated by modern doctrines. Perhaps the purest drama of return comes out of Ireland, where John M. Synge wondrously succeeded in the recapture of a people's ethos. We are, of course, considering the drama as an art. The basis of art is order. But order is a whole. Art is a realization in experience of this need of man: the need of order in the multiplicity of sense. Our word *universe* expresses how universal this need is. Man does not say multiverse; man's first experience is of a one which he calls "I": his highest is also of a One which he calls God or Being. These unities are synthetic: they consist of many matters even in the simplest concept. And they are of many kinds. The scientific order or whole is of the mind; the aesthetic order is of the feeling, experiencing person; the religious whole is both of these, caught up into an integration wherein man must act his part, thereby becoming whole or (the same thing) holy. Now, this return which Synge achieved, since it was art, could be no mere sensory reminiscence, no intellectual concept. Synge has effectually withdrawn from the modern chaos into the entirety of the experience of a folk who live entirely in an archaic world. In *Riders to the Sea*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *In The Shadow of the Glen*, et cetera, a universe exists: it has its own gods, customs, sureties, laws, sci-

<sup>1</sup> A selection from an essay on the modern drama to appear in *The New World Series* edited by Professor Baker Brownell of Northwestern University.

ences, and problems. It is a universe in a pocket, a little lake off from the currents of the modern world. And its apartness betokens the onrushing Stream. In no age, where the waters of life are mastered and hence navigable, will there be an art so perfectly aloof as this. But since it is an art—an organic whole—it microcosmically gives an essence of ourselves.

Another instance of this method of salvation is the neo-Gothic drama of Paul Claudel. France is the land where the Mediaeval Synthesis came to most harmonious fruition. Its place, midway between the south and the north, each with its dissident forces that the architects of Christian Europe could not absorb, is symbol of this centrality. Gothic which is the art of the Mediaeval Whole was known as the *ars francorum*. Now, Claudel makes a return to the gothicism which lives in his blood, even as the folk-lore of Erin lived in the blood of Synge. His plays are a return to no sweet ethos straight as a flame in a still dawn, but to an intricate cosmos; to a world which Christ and Paul, Augustine and Francis, Bouillon and Abelard and Aquinas, Gregory and Palestrina wove into a counterpoint as wondrous as the Paradisal white of Dante, in which all colours find haven and surcease. Claudel's language is elaborate as the groinings of a cathedral; his mood recaptures the tones of the *rosace* filtering through transept and dark-carved choir. His action is a dark return, writhing and passionately wilful, to the womb of an old Mother. And here again, as with Synge, the perfectly aloof is a function of the modern chaos. In the true days of the Gothic, there was no drama like Claudel's; in the days of the kings of Aran, no word like Synge's. These are dramas not of a great Past nor of the simple peasants who project it: they are dramas of the present *returning into the past*.

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In a cultural chaos such as that in which the Christian Synthesis of Europe was released, values of the individual and of the personal will become enhanced, precisely because the individual, now undefended within the social Body, is endangered. Art, too, will move toward the creating of microcosmic and of special wholes. The personal integer will be relied on, the solitude of the soul will

be ennobled. Social arts will suffer, and the more purely lyric forms will flourish. Architecture and drama are social arts. As they cannot be made alone, to satisfy one man, so their themes are not amenable to romantic action: The architect must build in harmony with his client, with his workmen, with the standards of his city. Lacking such concord, his art suffers—as it has suffered since four centuries in Europe. The playwright, also, must live within the sympathetic context of craftsmen (producers, actors, scene-painters) and must possess an audience so attune with himself that it accepts the premises of his art which in two hours must complete its structure. The greatest drama has been produced in times where the story could be taken for granted: where its content was a common cultural possession. The selective groups which gathered under the tutelage of Louis XIV of France were the last instance of such support. Already with Molière and Racine, the public had grown discordant. Wanting such conditions of health, conceptual and social, the drama, like a disequibrated and ill-nourished body, has fallen prey to external forces, even as the unhealthy body is invaded by bacilli and eccentric habits.

The drama is a pure but complex form of art, in which the *word* is the seed and the flower of the entire action. Its materials are varied: dance, music, plastic forms may be among them. Indeed, the foundation of drama must be a counterpoint of bodily movements. But the word is the culmination of them all, the synthesis of all the life organized in the art. And this will continue to be the case, so long as it is the case with human beings: so long, that is, as men *speak* rather than sing or paint or dance, in articulation, communication, consummation of their social being. Where the word is ousted from this culminant place becoming either a "thing in itself" as in the "closet drama" or a subsidiary value, *there is a disease of drama*. Such maladies were rife in the nineteenth century and, as is often found in illness, the patient was not conscious that he was sick. Other arts, whose use in drama was traditional but mediary, came to the fore and captured almost autocratic powers. Imperious in these dislocations was the work of Richard Wagner. The decadence or isolation of the word is not mysterious; precisely because the word is the flowering synthesis of the play's organic action, a failure of wholeness will invalidate the word. Why music above all grew aggressive, invading not

drama alone but poetry and painting is a consideration which would lead us astray from the strict pattern of this essay. It suffices to present the clue: the immediate subjectivity and abstract objectivity of music. A world dispossessed of its laws and forms will revert to the subjective logic of the soul, and to the last objective surety of mathematics. Music is an aesthetic union of these two satisfactions salvaged from chaos. Thus, with Wagner, drama became Music Drama. The painters, too, stormed the dwindled centre. Adolph Appia, Gordon Craig, were men of genius who profited by the divided state of drama to divert the invalid into means for plastic presentation. These invaders had two general effects. They did not "kill" the drama; indeed its condition was responsible for their invasion. And in the end, they enriched it. If in the nineteenth century, the drama as pure art appeared to sink under the titanic influence of Wagner, he brought to the form fresh materials and concepts which later men were to transmute and naturalize. His revival of such normal means as the chorus, the dance, the song; his use of historical, mythic, and above all, symbolic stuffs was a treasury of freedom for dramatists who followed. Likewise the scene-painters, although they denatured the drama into mere spectacle or pantomime, served to enrich the palette of both action and actor.

The most significant invader was the *thesis*. The drama became analytic. It made an analysis of life into certain selected elements, instead of synthesizing all elements into life. It became reflective, instead of creative. Consciously, even proudly, it abandoned the realm of creative form, to mirror a torn world. State, church, business, art, science, ethics, politics, entertainment went each its way: and this diathesis was encouraged, instead of being creatively corrected, in the theatre. The disease is already evident in both Ibsen and Wagner, in their too central stress of thesis and idea. Their organic form, however, still absorbed the concept, which, of course, has its place in drama as a legitimate part of life. The lessons and symbols of Ibsen seem to us of slight importance, save in so far as, like the handkerchief of Desdemona, they inform the action. We are not thrilled by the Wagnerian doctrine of the *Leitmotif*, when the music is good: we forget readily enough the romantic ideology of the "marked man"—the individual soul with stigmata on his brow that is subtly transformed from Rousseau, Chateaubriand,

and Byron into the Wagnerian symbol. As however, in other men, the organizing genius grew more feeble, such presences began to swarm, to invade, and to denature. Drama became a stricken body on which parasites of "*Tendenz*" battered.

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The world which had been One, when religion, science, logic, state, and law *lived together*, was crudely divided into two vast Camps: the one of nature or science which was mechanistic, the other of man which was poetic, an ideal personal flux of colours and emotions. Each Camp arrogated to itself the entire truth and strove to absorb the other. Mechanistic science tried to swallow man, individual and social. Human idealism, with such aids as the romantic movement and the subjectivist epistemology of the Germans, struggled to swallow nature and science by its proof that only logic and dream were real. Drama became involved in this bootless conflict. It became Naturalism—a serf of scientific facts, or it became Symbolism—an anarchy of immediate impressions. Allowing no truth upon the other side, each side remained a fragment and produced no master. The naturalists took, as their material, facts denatured of life; the symbolists distilled vagaries of the mind too remote from flesh and blood to be organic. Both schools took much from Ibsen—and with a like distorting of his whole. The naturalists were pleased to find that he depicted sordid and humble family relations: squalor and misery became, because of the Rousseau-istic cult of Demos, the norm for human nature. The symbolists overlooked the body of his work, even as the naturalists his spirit, and were pleased to recall Ibsen's romantic and vaguely mystic symbology of objects.

There proceeded an output of maimed art, in which, because of the false premise, much genius was vaporized or stifled. André Antoine founded his Théâtre Libre, Lugné-Poë his Maison de l'Oeuvre, in Paris. Although the former was associated with the Naturalism of Zola, the latter with the Symbolism of Ibsen, these two remarkable theatres which revived the traditional life departed from the Théâtre Français, served both schools; under Antoine, for instance, evolved François Cureau, the French Ibsen. One Parisian

dramatist of genius worked in the Naturalists' mould: Henry Becque, whose plays *Les Corbeaux* and *La Parisienne* had such potency of line, such solidity of colour, that one marvels at what this artist might have done, had he been nurtured by an integral tradition instead of by a schism. In Germany, Naturalism was soon running rampant: since it was but a nether side of the Romantic movement, this was to be expected. Gerhardt Hauptmann produced his Naturalist masterpiece, *Vor Sonnenaufgang* in 1889, and oscillated with ease between this form and its reverse. There could have been no Symbolist movement, without the doctrines of Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Novalis, Fichte. Sensory impressions were to be modelled into personal creations, for the ideal alone was true, and man was solitary in a universe of his own making. To this, add the value of strangeness in a world where the individual was "lost"; tincture with the conclusion that, since the apparent is not real, the stuff of art should be as unapparent as it can be; and you have the ingredients with which France produced the masterworks of the Symbolistic drama. The *Axël* of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, the early plays of Maurice Maeterlinck, the *Pelléas et Mélisande* of Claude Debussy, *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* by Stéphane Mallarmé attest the quality of this movement which, of course, produced its equivalents in painting. William Butler Yeats, refracting the folk-lore of his land, carried the cause into Ireland: his *Cathleen ni Hoolihan* is a good instance. The dramatic essence can be well scrutinized in the best work of Maeterlinck: *La Princesse Maleine*, *Les Aveugles*, *La Mort de Tintagilles*. When the first of these appeared, the Naturalistic writer, Octave Mirbeau, hailed a successor to Shakespeare. We have reacted from such excessive praise into an unjust depreciation. Maeterlinck's best works have the exact quality of fine perfume and a form, not more organic than a song's, but no less luminous. They bespeak an exquisite nostalgia for the sources of life, as a soul, stripped by the mechanolatry of science, confused and poorly nourished by the vast Hegelian compensations, would be moved to enact them.

This split into two great opposing Camps of course is but a symptom of the classic dualism of the western world.



## PROTHALAMIUM

BY A. J. M. SMITH

Here in this narrow room there is no light;  
The dead tree sings against the window pane;  
Sand shifts a little, easily: the wall  
Responds a little, inchmeal, slowly, down.  
My sister, whom my dust shall marry, sleeps  
Alone, yet knows what bitter root it is  
That stirs within her: see, it splits the heart—  
Warm hands grown cold, grown nerveless, as a fin,  
And lips enamelled to a hardness—  
Consummation ushered in  
By wind in sundry corners.

This holy sacrament was solemnized  
In harsh poetics a good while ago—  
At Malfi and the Danish battlements,  
And by that preacher from a cloud in Paul's.  
No matter: each must read the truth himself,  
Or, reading it, reads nothing to the point.  
Now these are me, whose thought is mine, and hers,  
Who are alone here in this narrow room,  
Tree fumbling pane, bell tolling,  
Ceiling dripping and the plaster falling,  
And Death, the voluptuous, calling.



## AURELIA'S EYES

BY AZORIN

*Translated From the Spanish by Katie Lush*

CESTONA is an elegant, fashionable, comfortable hotel; Urberuaga is a sanatorium. One might say that Cestona with its wide, symmetrical corridors like salons, is like a modern Jesuit college; while Urberuaga, with its narrow, winding, calcimined, low-ceilinged passages is like a modest Franciscan convent. Each watering-place is similarly situated—in the hollow of a valley; but in Urberuaga the valley is narrower, the stream more impetuous, the chestnut-trees smaller; and an undefined foreboding, a vague oppression—mere prejudice at first—lays hold of you as you reach the door. But force yourself, pretend you have an easy mind, shake off the presentiment, cross the threshold.

Architecturally the building is a congeries of additions, pavilions built on as the years went by and the need arose. The principal block of buildings stands in a little hollow; four steps lead down to it. . . . Now we stand before the door; come with me into the narrow *zaguán*. Behind it is a long, bare passage ending in a space divided by three columns. . . . Here is a small door opening into the crypt in which a crystal-clear thread of living water springs from earth. A few steps further on we find a small salon furnished with divans and containing plants in tubs. We cross a *patizuelo*, find ourselves in another corridor and emerge in another vestibule; here we find the postal-bureau, the office of the medical superintendant and long show-cases full of trinkets and odds and ends. Further still: another salon and another long passage take us to the "pulverization rooms" and vapour baths. . . . We retrace our steps; again we go through pump-room, medical office, postal-bureau, and along the passage we first traversed, in search of the stairway that will take us to the upper story. Arrived there we find ourselves in a narrow corridor lined with small doors; the floor is of hardwood, waxed and shining; a narrow trail of reflected light

loses itself in the distance; our nostrils are assailed by the scent of fresh, aromatic country herbs, of chloride of ether. Why not walk along the passage? Do you know anything pleasanter than to explore a strange house? Do you know a more agreeable sensation than that of surprising one by one, things and actions you are unaccustomed to and that now leap to your eyes?

This passage leads to another. Turn to the right; cross a short salon with a glass door; go up a few steps and you will find yourself at one end of a wide landing facing more stairs which you must descend in order to reach a spacious salon with divans set all round the walls, mirrors on which landscapes are painted, and an upright piano, its red back standing out vividly from the background. Is this enough? Have you achieved a synthetic perception of this new *milieu*? All these corridors, all these landings, all these halls, are silent, deserted; the floors shine; the walls appear calcimined. Now and again, through the silence, you hear a short, dry cough perhaps, or a long, hard cough. And you are conscious of something intimate in the atmosphere, something deeply provincial, something in the network of rooms and passages with floors on different levels, something in the simplicity of the furniture, in the height and depth of the beds, in the frank, simple manners of the servants, in the true simplicity of the cooking. . . . You—and I—are in the mood to savour all these so Spanish particulars. In a little while, when you have been in the place another hour, your palate will be fully satisfied. For you will by then have perceived that the air you breathe is not only profoundly provincial, but is also—the logical, necessary consequence of this—saturated with a dreamy, melancholy romanticism. You have heard of the virtue of these waters, surely? You know that sick “aesthetes” (in the literal meaning of the word) crowd to these springs, do you not? And would you deny the intimate connexion between pallor, dark circles under the eyes, slenderness, and an infinite, tragic despair? If you love these romantic provincial girls, so gentle, so sad, so delicate, so imaginative, girls who weep and sigh and plunge suddenly from joy to grief, who keep at the bottom of some box a faded photograph and letters bearing the stamp of some café or *fonda*, who tend some climbing plant and play the Funeral March of a Marionette on the piano, who read Campoamor and Bécquer from a volume held

in the folds of a newspaper, who flash a glance in a mirror to see whether they have lost their looks, who, on dark winter days, watch from behind a blind the passing of a stranger, a gallant perhaps who will revolutionize their lives . . . If you love such girls, come to Urberuaga. There I knew Eulalia, Juanita, Lola, Carmen, María, Enriqueta. And, above all, there I saw the wide, vague, sad eyes of Aurelia.

"What do you do with yourself, Aurelia?" I heard a young man who was dancing with her ask last night.

"Nothing," she replied; "I watch the water of the river . . ."

Aurelia leans over the railing of the bridge in one of those elegant attitudes of absorption and abandonment in which Gavarni loved to place, on a terrace in a garden, or leaning on the arm of a sofa, the pale, delicate ladies of 1850. Aurelia is looking at the quiet waters of the river; but her absorbed, fixed eyes do not see the quiet waters of the river. Her figure is silhouetted, foreshortened against the pale sky of twilight.

This is the hour the highway claims from visitors to the springs; but you will not conform to their invariable usage. Behind the sanatorium, close to the stream, there is an extensive poplar-grove. It is to this your footsteps turn. The ground is carpeted with fine turf, one slope is covered with chestnut-trees, the other with low, stumpy apple-trees that bend their boughs over the water. Three, four lines of poplars divide this grove into wide avenues. The trunks of these trees are slender, straight, graceful; the foliage begins at a considerable height from the ground, so that you pass through this leafy place as through an intricate maze of columns sustaining a great green arch. And when you are tired of wandering about, you sit for a while on the river bank near a wide pool. Water-spiders skate about over the water in intermittent dashes, their four legs extended, quick and voluble. Now they go forward rapidly, now stop and turn about suddenly, violently. And each of their movements makes a circle in the water that joins or intersects other circles, sketching a capricious, momentary arabesque.

But night is coming on. You must go back to the sanatorium. A bell has just been ringing persistently. You pass again through the ground-floor passages and go upstairs again to the main floor. The lights have been lit and the long reflection on the polished

wood, like a narrow band of quicksilver, loses itself in the distance. A low murmur of voices, as of a humming, tuneful choir, reaches your ears; in the chapel the visitors are saying, as each evening they say, the Rosary. Then, with this mystic chanting in your ears, you go along the corridor and notice for the first time the old-fashioned, charming bells that hang over the doors, venerable ancestors of our mad electric bells. This tiny detail has already sufficed to plunge you in a dream of far-off romance. What more do you require? But the decisive thing is still to come. After supper go to the drawing-room for a moment. Here you find Juanita, Lola, Carmen, Enriqueta, Eulalia, you find the wide, sad eyes of Aurelia that gaze absorbed, unseeing, at the landscape on a fan. A few long, resonant notes are struck on the piano, and all these pretty, pale girls rise, go to the centre of the room, advance and retire slowly, take hands for a moment, retire again with courtly curtsies; dance, in fine, one of those sleepy Lancers that our mothers and grandmothers used to dance in their full skirts. Sentiment, and dreams have their way with you now. The company asks María to sing for them; María protests, smiles archly, becomes serious, coughs, and at length begins a languid, melancholy, plaintive song.

As you go away your soul is charged with an indefinable emotion. The passages are silent. You hear, perhaps, a distant sudden cough, short and dry, or long and persistent. You go to bed and sleep; to dream of the wide, dreaming eyes of Aurelia, to imagine you feel the faint beginnings of love—that last absurdity, that last delusion.

## GERMAN LETTER

Munich

June, 1928

OF Dürer, the four hundredth anniversary of whose death we are commemorating in Germany, I cannot think without reverting as well to the pure and exalted name of Nietzsche, who so epitomizes our history and our future that his name evokes in us at once the profoundest memories and the highest hopes. It was through Nietzsche that I was first enabled to behold with sympathy and perception the world of Dürer, to grasp it emotionally. For youth, naturally averse to history, can scarcely approach the archaic but by way of the modern which does not instruct us in the past but illuminates it for us. Does the Nuremberger's name occur in Nietzsche? I could not say. But when he speaks of Schopenhauer, on whose authority Wagner was encouraged to strengthen his feminine art by a principle of asceticism, when he says: "What does it signify that a real philosopher should embrace the ascetic ideal, a truly self-dependent intellect like Schopenhauer, *a man and knight with eyes of bronze, who has the courage of his own identity, who knows how to stand alone and does not look first for predecessors and for hints from superiors?*"—what has he in mind; or if he is thinking of something else, what does he mean by this unusually precise and detailed description of moral spontaneity and manliness? Would one be wrong in writing on the margin of this passage the name of Dürer? It would be well to add the laudatory verses with which Goethe, notwithstanding occasional classicistic disapproval of "turbid form and groundless fancy," characterizes Dürer's art, speaking of its solidity and manliness, its strength and steadfastness:

*"Ihr festes Leben und Männlichkeit,  
Ihre innere Kraft und Ständigkeit."*

Dürer, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner—here, in one "place," with two marginal notes, we should have it all at once: an entire nodus of destiny, a constellation, a world, the German

world, with the ambitious dramatization of itself, its magical and intellectualistic disintegration, coming last. Yet not last—for side by side with the great prestidigitator and conjurer, stands the conqueror and seer; coexistent with the play-actor of the myth is the myth itself—heroic and sacrificial, prophetic of a new and higher mankind.

But as for the intellectual premises and origins of the ethical tragedy in Nietzsche's life, of this deathless European drama of self-conquest, self-discipline, and self-crucifixion, with the expiatory destruction of the mind as a heart-rending and brain-rending consummation—where is such to be found if not in the protestantism of the Naumburg pastor's son, if not in that moralistic atmosphere (Nordic, German, bourgeois, typically Dürer) which is exemplified in the engraving Knight, Death, and Devil, which remains—through all Nietzsche's migrations—the native region of his soul? "I like in Wagner," he writes in 1868 to Rohde, "what I like in Schopenhauer: the ethical quality, the Faustian element—cross, death, and tomb." About the same period, at Basel, he heard the Saint Matthew's Passion three times during the week of Easter. . . . Cross, Death, and Tomb! They compose a further ingredient of the Dürer, Germanic mentality. Arms are crossed devoutly, with "manliness and steadfastness," as knighthood maintains itself between death and devil, through Passion, the smell of the crypt, sympathy with suffering, Faustian melancholia—and again the same thing can be an idyllic domiciled piety—a receptive peace—while the sun prints the bottle-glass design of window upon wall, imparting warmth to the death's head upon the sill, and an humble and restricted mind is kept responsive to greatness and the sense of eternity by hour-glass and reclining lion. . . .

What else? What more in the world, and what is it, but love, remembrance, norm, canon, moulding career and character as they descend through a line of masters and are embodied within us all? The *graphic* German: for the *love* of the German artist, plastic or verbal, pertains to delineation, not colour. Then also! much that is magnificent and much that is chaste, much that is proud and much that is hard of acceptance, both aspects evident to all. Is this not the fountain-head of *masterliness* itself, the noblest idea that we possess as a nation, the highest and most honoured, and the one that contributes most towards *unity*? For what rank,



power, honour, or brilliancy would take precedence in the German mind over the homely and subtly majestic ways of the "Master"? And in what could people of various opinions reach fuller agreement, even to-day, than in that idea of integrity, of loyalty to work, of authenticity, of maturity in living and art, of moral and intellectual leadership, which is subsumed under the concept of "Master"? The term combines respectability with that trait of audacity which Goethe ascribes to every artist. Industry here becomes depth, and accuracy greatness. Patience and heroism, dignity and uncertainty, traditionalism and insistence upon the unforeseen all commingle to form a unit. Ah, and what inadequacy—ethnic, innate, inherited from prehistory—what angular clumsiness, is not present in this eternity-ridden world of German art, with its antinomies of disorder and precision, metaphysics and vague meditation, childishness and age, scurrility and demonism, ashamed yet outspoken? Philistinism and pedantry, strenuous plodding, self-torment, exacting calculation—all unified with that absoluteness, insatiability, and high necessity which courage brings to fruition: this refusal to spare oneself in anything, this inviting of the last difficulty, this willingness to see a work ruined and made unfit for others rather than allow it in any particular to fall short of its utmost.

To think of Dürer is to love, to smile, to remember. Such remembrance implies all that is deepest and most impersonal, all that lies beyond and under the corporeal boundaries of our ego while yet determining and nourishing it. Dürer is history as myth, history which is always present and incarnate. For we are individuals far less than we hope or fear to be.

THOMAS MANN

# BOOK REVIEWS

## DISSECTING ANGUISH

CHILDREN AND FOOLS. By Thomas Mann. Translated from the German by Herman George Schef-fauer. 12mo. 264 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

THE process by which one comes to know an author, or that part of him which appears in his books, is exactly the process by which one comes to know a person in the flesh. One moves from one impression to another; he is this to-day, and that to-morrow; at first he seems predominantly sad, later one finds that this sadness conceals an undercurrent of irony or secret glee; his face is immobile, but one discovers that his talk is full of emotional or affective overtones; or one moves forward from a first impression of copiousness to a second one of essential thinness. And by slow evolution, all these separate impressions fuse in one image. The glee is added to the sadness, the thinness to the copiousness, the mysterious hint to the impassivity. One acquires a single image, in which, if the first magic of mystery is lost, one finds a kind of definite consolation in the fact that it now quite clearly seems to belong to a category.

The present reviewer's acquaintance with Thomas Mann, or his books, has been of that sort. It has been kaleidoscopic, confused, directionless, delicious. Buddenbrooks created the first image—solid, distinct, forthright, almost of the Arnold Bennett order. A four-square three-decker, but with a German, or Gothic, distortion. *Death in Venice*<sup>1</sup> broke this image, precisely as a dropped pebble breaks an image in a surface of water. This was something new—here was an affective overtone not experienced before. What, exactly, was this added something? As before, the story was simple and direct and naturalistic. The secondary characteristics were all, apparently, of the realistic school, if one may be permitted so loose a term. But decidedly there was something else. On the surface, everything was clear and simple and distinct. The

<sup>1</sup> Published in THE DIAL, March, April, May, 1924.



story—what there was of it—moved with no subterfuges to its tragic and quiet climax. And nevertheless, there was this queer something else, this nameless undertone, deep and melancholy, which gave the story a different quality, and gave the author, in one's memory, a new reputation. Perhaps the easiest epithet for this added quality is "poetic." If one had felt this in the earlier work, here and there, one had forgotten it in the prevailing sense of the real, or (as Henry James preferred to call it) the actual. But in *Death in Venice*, this became the dominant tone; the poetic or allegorical quality was precisely what one most remembered afterward. One remembered a tone, a haze, a vague disquieting tapestry effect, as of the smoke from autumnal burnings of leaves; an atmosphere heavy and *charged*; a feeling of that kind of poetic counterpoint which was habitual with Poe and Hawthorne. The tale was deep, melancholy, almost (in a sense) horrible. Beauty and horror were met, here, in a kind of balance.

The Magic Mountain moved one's general impression back again toward *Buddenbrooks*, but not all the way. Is one perhaps right in calling this enormous novel a kind of "secondary" masterpiece? It resembles *Buddenbrooks* in its leisure, its copiousness, its massive employment of circumstance. It differs from it in a slight dislocation toward what one might call the spiritual. This again is a three-decker: one of the finest examples of the really "exhaustive" novel which the present generation has given us. But it moves away from *Buddenbrooks* in at least one particular: one feels in it just a trace of an *arrière-pensée*, a mystic or pseudo-mystic current, barely revealed, a preoccupation with ultimates and eternals. Its superlative leisure, like that of Proust's great novel, annihilates time: it is indeed, in a sense, as the prologue makes clear, preoccupied with the sense of time, or of timelessness; and it is also curiously, and perhaps naturally (given this circumstance) preoccupied with death, and with the scale of values peculiar to the man who stands on the brink of death. Here we have a sanatorium full of tuberculosis victims, all of them obsessed with death, all of them charged with that queer recklessness and detachment which supervenes in such cases, where the approach of death is gradual, and all of them subnormal, as regards energy; the characterization is acute, detailed, profound; the hero, and Mynheer Peeperkorn, and Madame Chauchat, are magnificent; and the amount of time, for a patient and cynical review of the world, is unlimited. Except for the slight and intermittent love-story, which comes to no cli-

max, there is no plot: the novel has its excuse first in its richness as a microcosm (which everywhere refers to a macrocosm) and second in its exquisiteness of tone. It is a three-decker with a deep undercurrent of poetry: a kind of William Clissold written by a poet who happens, also, to have a streak of morbidity.

This streak of morbidity comes out most clearly, apparently, if one may safely judge by what has thus far been translated from the German, in the latest of Thomas Mann's books, *Children and Fools*. These are short stories, of which the most recent and best is dated 1926, and the others from twenty to thirty years earlier. In all of them is this queer Gothic something-or-other which one has obscurely felt from the beginning in Mann's work—most definitely in *Death in Venice*, perhaps, but also, as just noted, in *The Magic Mountain*. Knowing little of contemporary German literature, one hesitates to say that this is a mere Germanness: and nevertheless one is constantly feeling how curiously these tales resemble—if one may speak wholly of *affects*—the German fairy-stories which one read when one was a child. Here again is that blending of beauty and horror: of the mystic with the terrible: of life and the most morbid aspects of death. One feels that Mann is a victim of certain obsessions which he cannot escape. He must torture, and be tortured; he must die, and see death; he must be weak, and submit to the brutal; he must manage the scalpel which dissects an anguish, and manage it with a surgeon's scientific detachment. *Disorder and Early Sorrow*<sup>1</sup> is one of the most beautiful stories the present reviewer has ever read: the story of a child's first love, and of the father's jealousy; but even in this is the note of Gothic morbidity. And in the earlier and shorter stories, which are more purely analytical, and less circumstanced—almost, indeed, clinical statements—one detects a nearly unintermittent note of morbidity. They all deal with abnormals—they all deal with psychological disaster. The difference between these and the later stories is simply that the later ones are more poetic, more sublimated. The *Path to the Cemetery*, in the present volume—a story dated 1901—is a bare pathological or psychiatric outline for what might, in 1926, have been another *Death in Venice*.

Eventually, therefor, we begin to see Thomas Mann as a very special and slightly warped figure. But he is a poet, and that is all we need.

CONRAD AIKEN

<sup>1</sup> Published in *THE DIAL*, October and November, 1926.

## MORE WORDS

MORE WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN. By Ernest Weekley. 12mo. 192 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

THE famous "Words! Words!" conveys an obvious reproach with it—indeed several kinds of obloquy: but they must be very ungracious readers of Mr Weekley's books on the subject if they let any of the reproaches fall on him. It is of course perfectly true that this subject is not without its dangers—indeed that it seems to have a slightly—on its etymological side a more than slightly—diabolic or at least puckish tendency. In the study of any word-student, "Charing is not *Chère Reine*" should be painted up as a perpetual reminder. But there is not much danger of anything quite like this from Mr Weekley, though there are some pits open in the region of compound or double words with which he is here chiefly dealing. Perhaps even he has sometimes let himself follow wandering fires or refused to follow pretty trustworthy indications. For instance the present writer is not at all certain that "beef-eater" does come from "*buffetier*" but he is by no means inclined to accept Mr Weekley's dictum that that derivation is "a myth" or his argument against it and for the plain acceptance of the spelling. It is all very well to laugh at Little Arthur's History of England, which is said to have diffused *buffetier*: but Archbishop Trench and Professor Max Müller who also accepted it were not exactly Little Arthurs; and moreover were not only scholars but scholars of rather different kinds. Moreover, though there is not the slightest doubt that John Bull has always been a cannibal, why should he be more especially cannibalic in this small body of court attendants than elsewhere? Of course if the dictum of a French-English dictionary written in French that Courtiers ate beef and university men mutton be accepted, it is weighty. But—? No: "*buffetier*" is certainly not certain, but "beef-eater" = "eater of beef" and nothing more is not a little insufficient.

Another of the few instances in which one feels inclined to have a try at singlestick with Mr Weekley is "mealy-mouthed." Here he takes what may be called an opposite line or attitude to that

which he accepts in regard to the title of the Yeomen of the Guard: and will have it that *mel* "honey" and not "meal" is the origin of the first syllable. For this there seems, one must confess, no necessity whatever, while there is a good deal of argument against it and one quotation—evidently not known to Mr Weekley—which is something like fatal. To begin with he does not seem quite to appreciate the meaning of the term in relation to its supposed sources. "The *clogging* effects of meal on the vocal apparatus" surely have very little to do with the matter? It is the *softening* effect of meal on the lips. Again "mealy-mouthed" and "honey-tongued" are certainly not synonyms to-day and Mr Weekley's quotations seem rather insufficient to shew that they ever were: while even if they were once it would not settle the question. Meanwhile though he admits that his most formidable antagonist, the late Dr Bradley, produced an instance from Luther in which *Mehl* is used with *Maul* in exactly the same manner and with exactly the same sense as in our English word, he does not seem to know that Southey gives *enfarinhadamente* as an equivalent in Portuguese. Now though *mel* and *meal* may be very much like each other, *Mel* and *Farina* are not: and no Latin-born language is very likely to confuse them. Neither have there been many writers who knew both English and Portuguese better than Southey: while there is no indication in the passage<sup>1</sup> that he was intending—as he sometimes *did* intend—a joke at the time.

But enough of cavils. It would be pretty to say, "Let us exchange the singlestick for the paper-knife": but alas! the disuse of that implement as an addition to the enjoyment of a good book appears to be getting even more common in America than in England. You can no doubt do your business more quickly without it, but real Epicureans like to take their pleasures slowly.

It is not extravagant to say that there is not a page of the book which is not worth reading, while there are few if any, which will not yield pleasure as well as profit to any one with tolerably wide interests in life and literature. Mr Weekley holds the balance rather more even than the just now so much and so justly praised Oxford Dictionary in regard to "honey-moon." Those who will have it that the reference is only to *waning* seem to forget the waxing. "Selfhelp" is itself little more than a text or title for a very interesting study of other "self" compounds. It will certainly surprise some readers to find that nobody was *selfish* be-

<sup>1</sup> The Doctor, one-volume edition, p. 382, column 2.

fore the middle of the sixteen-sixties: but it makes amends to know that the word is a "Presbyterian coinage" of that date. That the rather obsolete exclamation "hoity-toity" probably has something to do with "hoyden" may give a more out of the way surprise. But, thank goodness, Mr Weekley himself will have nothing to do with that most unpoetical and indeed most absurd effort of misguided fantasy—the resolving of "foxglove" into "*folks* glove" with the further illumination of glossing "folk" as here meaning "fairy." One of our author's very rare slips occurs under "lion-hunter" where he seems to identify "gentleman-commoner" with "titled undergraduate." They were both privileged orders, but separate. Mr Ruskin, for instance, was a gentleman-commoner but in no way "titled" nor entitled to a gold "tuft" though he might wear a velvet cap. But one thanks Mr Weekley for pointing out that "ringleader" which is now practically always a term of depreciation was once quite respectable—Bishop Latimer calling Joab when still G. O. C. for David by it, while Coverdale actually applies the term to the apostles.

The agreeable practice of collecting a certain number of companion words under one heading is scarcely anywhere better shewn than under "jolly boat" where the object is ostensibly to prevent schoolboys from ignoring everything before motors: but the result is capable of wider well-doing. The title-word itself seems to have been a good deal fought over, the Dutch *jol* with the usual *y* pronunciation of the *j* being supposed to be preoccupied by "yaw!" and an old word "gallevat" having been discovered. But there were no end to sampling of this kind and we have given sufficient to justify the previous general recommendation. One thing however, or rather two, of more general importance should not be omitted. Mr Weekley draws attention to the very great service which Sir Walter Scott did in restoring good old words to the language: and in particular by refreshing people's vocabulary in this way from Shakespeare. The fact has not been very generally noticed and was well worth noticing. The work of the restorer is sometimes in both senses abused: but in such a case as this it can only do good, and deserve honour.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

## THE OXFORD JONSON

BEN JONSON. Volumes I, II, and III. *Edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson. To be published in ten volumes. 8vo. The Clarendon Press, Oxford. Volumes I and II, \$14; volume III, \$7.*

THE most conscientious reviewer would find it hard to write in anything but praise, when presented with three such sumptuous volumes as these; and should therefore rejoice to find that the scholarship and critical abilities of the editors deserve the elegance of the printing. This is as fine and as final an edition as any Elizabethan dramatist has yet received; if there are any flaws, they are beyond the competence of this reviewer to discover. The arrangement of the book, first, is one to be commended to all editors of voluminous authors, who aim to combine the functions of scholarship, criticism, and biography. Not only the biography and the general critical estimate, but also the introductions to the several plays, are united in the first two volumes; only with Volume III do the texts begin; and with the first three volumes we have the texts of only four plays: *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Case is Altered*, *Every Man in His Humour*, and *Every Man Out of His Humour*. This is the right method, for it offers two advantages. Readers who cannot afford all ten volumes can buy the first two, and have at least the most final and exhaustive account of the life and work of Ben Jonson. And while we await the rest of the work, volume by volume, we have already assembled in Volume II, critical introductions to all the plays and minor work.

It would be impossible to review thoroughly the information and criticism of these three volumes; one who has already committed himself to a critical estimate of Jonson's plays finds not only much new information, but many critical suggestions to correct or to extend his own. The last chapter of the general introduction, entitled *Final Appreciation*, condenses a sound opinion into nine pages. Against the common view which would isolate Jonson from his contemporaries, and style him "pseudo-classical," we recommend the following passage:



"It is clear that the cleavage between his work and the mass of contemporary production was by no means so deep and wide as his frequent air of aggressive isolation would suggest. To contrast Jonson as a thoroughbred neo-classic with the "romantic" Elizabethans is a very imperfect way of representing his relation to his fellow-dramatists. . . . More than this, a great part of the matter of Jonsonian drama is common ground. Marston and Dekker, Nashe, Middleton, Fletcher, Beaumont, Shakespeare himself, and scores of others, whatever their divergences from him and from one another, are Jonson's fellows and comrades at one point,—the drastic and humorous representation of the life of Elizabethan England."

And on the reputation of Jonson the authors are equally good:

"It is founded even now less upon enjoyment or admiration than on the unforgettable image which has come down to us of 'Ben,' the most familiarly known to us, beyond comparison, of all the Elizabethans. Jonson, apart from all questions of merit or demerit, is *there*, a personal force even more than a creative power. . . . Only some nine years younger than Shakespeare, Jonson belongs to an England which had grown older by at least twice as many in that swiftly maturing time."

From the biography, with its notes, letters, and documents, we get an impression of the man essentially the same as that of his tradition, but merely graven deeper. (We repeat with pleasure Jonson's note on his *Catiline*: "there's one scene in that play which I think is flat: I resolve to mix no more water with my wine.") It was through an immensely impressive personality, as much as by the greatness of his work, that Jonson influenced, more than any other one man, the whole course of English literature: it may be asked whether a man of such personality, like Samuel Johnson after him, is not always likely to be read about rather than read. It may be this, as much as the difficulty or asperity of the plays themselves, that has left them to be the reading, and the not very constant reading, of a few privileged admirers.

There is much to be learned by reading the introductions to

the several plays straight ahead, as they are here presented, as a consecutive study in criticism. Among the hints which I have got in this way, here is one point which I ought myself to have observed and emphasized years ago. We are apt to think of Sejanus and Catiline as by-products, as unsuccessful attempts to write tragedy, a mode for which the genius of Jonson was unfitted. But Catiline and Sejanus are no more tragic, in significance, than Volpone is comic. They are variations on exactly the same sensibility as that of the great comedies. Messrs Herford and Simpson bring out very well the capital importance of Sejanus in the preparation of Jonson for writing Volpone and The Alchemist and The Silent Woman:

"Closely as Sejanus is modelled upon history, none of Jonson's dramas is more Jonsonian in conception and execution. If he alters little in his historical materials, it is partly because history in some important points played as it were into his hands, providing both a kind of action and a prevailing quality of character singularly suited to his genius and to his art. The advance in coherence upon any of the Humour plays, after the first, is enormous; upon *Every Man in His Humour* itself, it is considerable. He was entering in fact upon a new phase of his art. The immense constructive grip soon to be shown in Volpone and The Alchemist is already approached, as their dramatic situation is anticipated."

The resemblances between Sejanus and Volpone are particularized, and the criticism of the former closes with this paragraph:

"On the whole, Sejanus is the tragedy of a satirist—of one who felt and saw more intensely the vices and follies than the sorrows of men, and who, with boundless power of scorn, was poorly endowed in pity. He could draw the plotting of bad men, their savage vengeance, their ruinous fall; he could draw the fatuities and mishaps of fools; but the delusions which jangle and overthrow a noble nature lay beyond his sphere. Jonsonian tragedy suffers from an inner poverty in the humanities of the heart,—analogous to the wilful bareness of style which masks the poetic core of the tragedy of Ibsen. But the imagination is



nevertheless impressed by this sombre fabric of verdureless flint and granite, too arid and savage to leave any coign of vantage for sympathy."

This is good criticism, though the analysis could be carried farther. For it does not explain the fact that the satire of Swift, with equal power of scorn, equal perception of folly, stupidity, and evil, moves our feeling as nothing of Jonson's can do. The last chapter of the *Voyage to the Houyhnhnms* is, in its kind, more terrible satire than anything Jonson ever wrote, yet it can move us to pity and a kind of purgation. We feel everywhere the tragedy of Swift himself, we never feel any tragedy about Jonson. Jonson nevertheless remains for us a great personality, as was Swift; but this personality is largely given through the tradition about the man, and nowhere completely in his work; and Swift on the other hand is wholly a terrific personality *in* his work. What is the difference? It is not to say that Swift was a greater man, or a greater artist, than Jonson; nor can we say in return that Jonson's was a keener intellect than Swift's. But the work of Swift came out of deeper and intenser emotion.

What is repellent to many readers in the plays of Jonson, or what at least leaves them indifferent, is perhaps this fact that the satire fails of the first intensity, by not seeming to come out of deep personal feeling. By the consistency of the point of view, the varied repetition of the same tone, by artistic constructive skill, Jonson does create the illusion of a world, and works a miracle of great satire without great emotion behind it. But it is not a world in which any one can live for long at a time, though it is one from the study of which every writer can profit.

T. S. ELIOT

## ETCHED IN MOONLIGHT

ETCHED IN MOONLIGHT. *By James Stephens. 12mo.*  
199 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

IN Etched in Moonlight James Stephens has accomplished the feat, always hazardous for a writer, of passing from one idiom into another. His new book is in a new manner and deals with a new material, and yet it is as vital and personal as any of the books we think of as being distinctively Stephens'. There is nothing of the exuberance of *A Crock of Gold*, or *Deirdre*, or *Irish Fairy Tales*, in the latest volume; it has fantasy, but its fantasy is not now of happening or of character, but of idea. Even the distinctiveness of background has been suppressed in the tales that make *Etched in Moonlight*: the story that gives title to the collection has no particular land for its setting; we may surmise the Irish countryside or Dublin as backgrounds for the other tales, but locality is not stressed at all. The language is no longer highly coloured or quaintly phrased; it is fluent, but it is plain, and where there is abundance the abundance comes from the writer's dwelling with a sort of penetrating reverie upon a scene which has come up before him. What climaxes he leads up to are given in a kind of under-statement. Here, for instance, is a picture of a house where starvation has been:

"Into this place the gentleman called on the following day to investigate, and was introduced to a room swept almost as clean of furniture as a dog-kennel is; to the staring, wise-eyed child who lived in a chair; and to the quiet morsel of death that lay in a cot by the wall."

What James Stephens gives us in this book are moralities—that is to say, they are judgements of certain aspects of human nature formed by a man who is seeking for some wise way of living. His material and his method are not new discoveries of his: they are developments of a vein that was in previous works—the vein that

is in the *Philosopher of A Crock of Gold and Here Are Ladies*. The *Philosopher* in these books was whimsical, spontaneous, and untaught. His creator has become reflective; he has become capable of giving us these penetrating moralities.

As in a morality all the interests, all the relations in these stories are simplified. One story is a narrative of a dream. In another story, the poignancy of a parting comes to us through a woman's dream of a journey to the Arctic: she wakes to find her husband dead beside her. This is the unforgettable story, *Desire*, which was originally published in *THE DIAL*.<sup>1</sup> What James Stephens is probably trying to do in this collection is not to give us a human passion as it is reacted upon and related to the feelings of other individuals, but as it is in itself, as it is isolated. He gives us the baffled desperateness of the starving; he gives us the hushed excitement that comes to a man who is given a glimpse of his life's boundaries and of some prospect beyond; he gives us the queer ruffianliness that might come over us as we heard for the hundredth time the whine of a pesterer; he gives us the sudden hatred that can take possession of a man as a demon might, suppressing the whole of a self that he knew. From these bare and simplified experiences a full, an exciting life rises up, making red-blooded romances and heavily documented accounts of people's lives empty and tame. The incidents which James Stephens records are concerned only with what is constant in human nature, and so the people in whose lives they happen have little of what we call character: I do not recall that any of them have names. Anything that has happened to any one of them might have happened to all of them, although there are those in the stories who are great lords and ladies and those who are lowly, those who have security and those who perish of hunger. And the scene upon which the people look is generalized also—the localities in the book one remembers are the moonlit plain on which the ancient castle stands and the white arctic country—both scenes in a dream. The writer of these stories seems to have turned away from the diversity of the world and to have thought only upon what tragic and ludicrous motions the human soul in its loneliness makes. And the language in which he writes of these things seems to be so spontaneous that

<sup>1</sup> June, 1920.

it might be just speech written down. Etched in Moonlight is like the beginning of literature—a beginning with simple and fundamental situations, with actual speech, with a gravity of outlook. But Mr Stephens has not let go of the humour that is always his. One of the nameless men in his stories is given us in this way:

"His ears swung slightly outwards. The ends of his trousers flopped about his ankles, and from the flop and waggle of these garments one knew that his legs were as skinny as matches. One divined that his elbows were sharp enough to wear a hole through his coat, and that his feet were longish and flattish and that his toes mounted energetically on top of each other."

PADRAIC COLUM

## BRIEFER MENTION

**THE ISLAND WITHIN**, by Ludwig Lewisohn (12mo, 350 pages; Harpers: \$2.50). All Gentile spectators at that quintessential Jewish miracle-play, *The Dybbuk*, must have recognized the possibilities of intense psychic tragedy in the *modern* predicament of the cultured Jew in a great Western city; and in this rather hurriedly written story such possibilities are roughly but vigorously developed. Where almost all other novels on this subject may be accused of dullness *The Island Within* is written with so much intensity that it holds the reader, irritated though he may be by a thousand aesthetic lapses, willynilly from start to finish.

**DAISY AND DAPHNE**, by Rose Macaulay (12mo, 334 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50) is at first sight a "stunt novel." Two characters appear through the opening chapters and then the author calmly announces that of course the reader has all the time been aware that they are only two sides of one character. He hasn't, necessarily. But if he has, he has admired the technical agility of the stunt. The rest of the book is the story of the defeat of the brilliant Daphne by the honest, stupid, and cowardly Daisy. Like all of Miss Macaulay's work it is a satire of contemporary society. In this one the mechanism, apart from the stunt, is a little run down, only a few of the many incidents come off properly. For all of that, Miss Macaulay is intelligent and intelligence makes good reading.

**WORLDS' ENDS**, by Jacob Wassermann, translated from the German by Lewis Galantière (12mo, 278 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). In these five sketches Mr Wassermann may be judged both at his best and at his worst. Indeed, it seems strange that any one who could have depicted with such faultless restraint, such firm and sober insight, the stubborn character of Adam Urbas could have been guilty of the flagrant theatricality of Jost. Perhaps Mr Wassermann is at times too vulnerable to suffering and injustice to be a great, dispassionate artist.

**THE MAN WITH SIX SENSES**, by M. Jaeger (12mo, 272 pages; Hogarth Press: 7/6) is a speculative novel possessing something of the Henry James approach but little of the Henry James substance. The story of the eccentric Michael Bristowe is set down in a manner so coldly psychological that one's sympathies are not held—although one's interest undoubtedly is. It is as if the author had taken the bare frame of a case history and draped it in the outer garments of fiction.

**THE CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY**, by Thomas Walsh (10mo, 552 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). Professor Thomas Walsh has ranged far for the flowers he has gathered. Each singer of Catholic piety for the last nineteen hundred years is represented. Catholic poems by non-Catholic poets are also included. This book gives the secular reader an opportunity of appreciating how much our literary culture owes to the church of Rome.

AND OTHER POEMS, by John Mavrogordato (brochure, 12mo, 139 pages; R. Cobden-Sanderson: 5/). Mr Mavrogordato is least satisfying when he speaks in his own person. His lyrical poems are somewhat thin, somewhat flaccid, distinctly decorative and sentimental, and seldom give evidence of much intensity or insight. His translations from Greek folk-songs, in quantitative measures, have charm, however, and are managed with excellent judgement and taste. And in the fragment of a play, *Cassandra in Troy*, Mr Mavrogordato really surprises us (if we come to it last) with his power and severity. This is an admirable thing, and more truly in the spirit of Greek drama than many such attempts which are better known.

FIREFLIES, by Rabindranath Tagore, decorations by Boris Artzybasheff (12mo, 274 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). These delicate moth-wings of elusive wisdom carry a good deal more of the peculiar spiritual urbanity and serene detachment of their author than his longer and more pretentious poems. Limpid as water-colour vignettes, they are characteristically East Indian in tone. Lacking the dramatic intensity of Blake's mystical aphorisms; lacking too the wistful humour of Chinese poetry; they convey to the mind a tender resignation, soft and insidious, like a diffused perfume, suspected rather than poignantly inhaled.

EXILE AND OTHER POEMS, by Theodore Maynard (10mo, 101 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press: \$2). *Three* sincere, authentic, deeply-felt motifs dominate these intense and unrheterical verses: religious faith, revolt against modern machinery, and an intense love of the English country-side. In the poem entitled *Not England*, which is perhaps the most vigorous in the volume, Mr Maynard shamelessly puts out his tongue, from the very shelter of that golden Step-mother's lap, upon the alien sublimities of California! A little more humour, a little more austerity, a little more of some original twist of temperament, and these three motivations could be tuned up to a fine issue.

PLAYS OF NEGRO LIFE, selected and edited by Alain Locke and Montgomery Gregory (8vo, 430 pages; Harpers: \$5) embraces the outstanding dramas of negro material which have been brought forth in the last dozen years. There are twenty titles, of which Eugene O'Neill contributes two, and Ridgely Torrence and Paul Green three each. Such a collection may well dispel any remaining public doubts as to the authentic and vital character of a dramatic movement already rich in achievement, and giving every indication of a sustained and natural growth. What is true of the domain of drama is equally striking in the realm of poetry, as one quickly discovers in turning the pages of *CAROLING DUSK*, An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets, edited by Countee Cullen (8vo, 237 pages; Harpers: \$2.50). Mr Cullen has ballasted his selection with representative verse from such outstanding figures as Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson, and W. E. Burghardt du Bois, but with equal pride he gives place to an array of younger singers—a buoyant and sensitive throng. By no means the least interesting detail of the anthology is the autobiographical note which accompanies each name.



**TREES AT NIGHT**, A Collection of Drawings, by Art Young (8vo, 39 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3). Those who see a man in the moon and who also love to detect faces and figures in clouds will relish Mr Young's persistent analogies between trees and people. Sensitive orientals think it an error in taste to liken nature to humanity in this fashion—they prefer to reverse the process and flatter humanity by likening it to nature—but Western and Eastern notions are often at variance and there seems to be no special reason, as yet, why the West should concede to the East in this business. Certainly Mr Young's drawings of trees that look like people are not without unabashed American admirers.

**THE SUBSTANCE OF ARCHITECTURE**, by A. S. G. Butler, with foreword by Sir Edwin Lutyens, R. A. (illus., 8vo, 320 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press: \$4). One of the phrases most used by architects to indicate high praise of a building, is the term: "It's architecture." To instruct laymen so that they, too, may use the term properly is the purpose of Mr Butler's book. He goes a considerable length in accomplishing this, once he gets started, but it must be confessed he is slow in starting—his first chapters not being seductive to laymen. And occasionally he is too technical—what can the layman make, for instance, of the complicated explanation of the rhythm in the window of the *Musée Cluny*? The true enthusiasm of the writer, however, is an easy thing to respond to, and there are some definitions of the abstract qualities of music and architecture that are delightful.

**THE RUINED ABBEYS OF GREAT BRITAIN**, by Ralph Adams Cram (illus., 8vo, 297 pages; Marshall Jones: \$5). As description this essay is to be recommended. Mr Cram's knowledge of church architecture is unquestioned and he writes well. His enthusiasm for England's past glories touches an answering chord in the bosom of the individual of taste, and his contention that the grandest English abbeys were those that lie in ruins at Glastonbury, York, and Guisborough can be accepted. Not so his ethics. His half-repressed plea for the re-introduction of monasteries is not likely to be heard, for a thousand institutions now perform their spiritual offices and the mere sentimental feeling of regret for a beauty that has passed is insufficient argument for the restoration of an order that died, the world now feels, a natural death.

**THE INNS OF GREECE AND ROME**, by W. C. Firebaugh, illustrated by Norman Lindsay (8vo, 271 pages; Pascal Covici: \$5). A sprightly vein of bawdy scholarship animates this erudite but unbeguiling treatise on Classical Innkeeping. The style frequently lapses into the Pullman-Smoking-Car variety of wit; but the author has certainly collected together many curious antiquarian details, and his quotations from Catullus, Petronius, and Apuleius fall aptly enough and well to the point. The book has its entertaining passages; but no monk of the Dark Ages could have produced a better indictment of the jaded sensuality against which the Early Christians reacted. It is interesting to be reminded that civilization owes the invention of *beer* neither to Greece nor to Rome but to the remotest Pharaohs of Egypt . . . possibly to Osiris himself!

**THE TRAVELS OF WILLIAM BARTRAM**, edited by Mark Van Doren (12mo, 414 pages; Macy-Masius: \$2.50). After the surly humours and audacious brutalities of other Nordic travellers the reader of the gentle Bartram finds himself transported into a luxuriant Earthly Paradise where the grave botanical recognition of each specimen of semi-tropical vegetation is offered up as a sort of Addisonian hymn of piety to the Great Spirit. The lavish growths of these green swamps and savannahs of colonial Georgia and Florida are treated with an exuberant reverence at once scientific and mystical. From the iridescent Ephemerae, doomed so soon to perish, to the crocodiles "uttering hissing roars that shake the earth," all the teeming life of these rank places, along with an aboriginal humanity of patriarchal worth, is described with a religious gusto worthy of a W. H. Hudson of the eighteenth century.

**SHELLEY, His Theory of Poetry**, by Melvin T. Solve (12mo, 207 pages; University of Chicago Press: \$3). One of the three most-written-about young men who have ever lived—the late Percy Bysshe Shelley—has inspired—if that be the word—another college professor to the making of a book. Prof. Solve states, in his acknowledgement, that he is under obligation to "almost everyone who has published in this field," and it does truly seem as though he were. The references to their teachings are neatly incorporated into this certainly intelligent but unduly expanded essay upon the "aesthetic" of the great poet.

**APHRA BEHN**, by V. Sackville-West (12mo, 170 pages; Representative Women Series, Viking Press: \$2). In this competent biography we are made acquainted with the works and character of one whom we must certainly honour since she was the first woman in England to earn money by her pen. Generous, susceptible, and recklessly outspoken, we follow her career from a pauper's prison to a life of successful and emancipated activity.

**NAPOLEON THE MAN**, by R. McNair Wilson (8vo, 619 pages; Century: \$5);

**NAPOLEON AND HIS WOMEN FRIENDS**, by Gertrude Aretz, translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul (8vo, 375 pages; Lippincott: \$5).

There is one thing common to both these books—and to the Emil Ludwig Life that preceded them—they testify to the world's complete change of front in regard to Napoleon. Instead of the scourge of the earth he is now felt to have been the people's friend, perhaps the only sincere one in the troubled period from which he emerges as the chief glory. Dr Wilson is almost sentimental in his admiration of the hero. His Napoleon could do no wrong. It is indeed surprising to discover so simple a biographer among the contemporaries of Mr Lytton Strachey. Dr Wilson has quite evidently explored all the immense libraries of data upon the subject and has assembled his notes into a clear and ordered work that has aspects of the successful text-book. It may be recommended unreservedly to high schools. There is, on the other hand, no immediate necessity for high-school students to occupy themselves with the "Women Friends." Or, at least, one should undoubtedly have read the virtuous Dr Wilson's book first. Then one would have a viewpoint from which to forgive certain friendships which otherwise might appear "light."



**THE LIFE OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI**, by Luigi Salvatorelli, translated from the Italian by Eric Sutton (8vo, 313 pages; Knopf: \$4). The freshest and most valuable portion of this Life of St Francis is its historic and scenic setting. This is delineated with scholarly thoroughness and poetic grace. The weakest aspects of the book are those that might be termed *psychological*; for the saint's character and aims are treated with so much orthodox piety that very little new light is thrown upon the emotional crises of his dramatic story. On the other hand the book is strikingly free from rhetoric or sentimentality; and the purely ecclesiastical problems pertaining to the founding of the Franciscan Order are dealt with tactfully and with skill.

**STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE**, by Allardyce Nicoll (12mo, 168 pages; Hogarth Lectures, No. 3, Harcourt, Brace: \$1.25). These carefully written studies fall into a special type of critical work and their very excellence in their own *genre* throws an illuminating *aperçu* upon a method which is found betraying its inherent unsatisfactoriness by the curious weariness induced in the reader's mind. The stress is laid on the obvious dramatic "data" of the *psychology* of the principal characters; with the result that the essential genius of the poet, manifested in his diffused magical-sardonic, lyrical-romantic reactions to life, passes untouched and uninterrupted. The "whirling words" of Hamlet lose, for example, their universal application and become just one more deftly introduced dramatic proof that he is really, just a little, *mad*!

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON**, with introduction and epilogue by Edmund Blunden (16mo, 424 pages; The World's Classics, Oxford University Press: 80 cents). However much of a failure B. R. Haydon was as an artist—and he seems to have been colossally inept—he was a vivid enough figure in the life of his time and his memoirs provide some thrilling pictures of it. His account of the Paris of just after Napoleon's fall is memorable. Few writers make you see it so distinctly. So, too, the Coronation Dinner to George IV. So, too, the glimpses of Keats, Sir Walter Scott, and the Duke of Wellington. As history his book cannot be ignored, and as writing it cannot be forgotten. The Oxford Press is quite right to include it in its World's Classics and puts the younger artist set, who will thoroughly enjoy this "inside" account of an artist's struggle for patronage, under a real obligation.

**SELECTED ENGLISH LETTERS, XV-XIX Centuries**, arranged by M. Duckitt and H. Wragg (16mo, 460 pages; The World's Classics, Oxford University Press: 80 cents). These fragments, each one evoking a personality that flashes and is gone, a man or woman once so living, so full of the importance of the passing moment, are rich with implications. Milton describing to his Greek friend Philaras the advance of his blindness, Swift's eager plea for word from Stella, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's account of her first appearance at court, Cowper's effort to be merry in order to avoid melancholy—all leave in their wake a retrospect sad and memorable.

## THE THEATRE

"WITH the production of such freshman junk," writes George Jean Nathan, "the Provincetown Playhouse loses all critical respect."

The reference is to *HIM*, by E. E. Cummings.

Shortly after this play was produced the Provincetown Playhouse asked me to write an introduction to a pamphlet in which the opinions of the dramatic critics were contrasted with those of the book reviewers who had discussed the play when it was published. The pamphlet raised a row and consequently I may be prejudiced about the whole matter. It still seems to me that the critical reception of *HIM* is at least as interesting as the play itself, and since I have been accused of "being crazy about" the play, I would like to issue a *démenti*. I am not crazy about *HIM* and I am a little crazy about Aristotle.

For the one thing which after many years remains with me is the Aristotelian practice of keeping one's eye on the object, of criticizing the thing criticized and not the grandfather of the artist nor his taste in haberdashery nor his private opinions nor his previous efforts. And what I had to say about the New York dramatic critics was simply that they allowed themselves to be diverted from the play set before them and that in reporting on it, reviewing and criticizing it, they did not clearly indicate what the play was. They said it was mad and sophomoric and dirty; they put adjectives to it—not nouns or verbs; they quoted an inept programme note, and talked about Mr Cummings' typography, his poetry, his prose. But they gave no clue to the perfectly apparent character and nature of the play itself.

Here, for instance, is all—absolutely all—that Mr Nathan says on the subject:

"For utter guff, this Cummings exhibition has never been surpassed within the memory of the oldest play-reviewer operating in Manhattan. It is incoherent, illiterate, preposterous balderdash, as completely and unremittingly idiotic as the human mind, when partly sober, can imagine. The author may be identified as a

young man without any thus far revealed talent of any sort who has sought to attract attention to himself by composing verse rid of all sense, rhyme and punctuation, by declining to use capital letters and printing his name in lower case, and by confecting a war novel the big kick of which consisted in the use of a word hitherto more intimately associated with the lavatory than with literature. Professing to detect genius in these obvious monkey-shines, one or two dubious commentators have spilled some ink in celebration of Cummings' gifts, but all that the majority of critics and laymen have been able to detect in him has been a sub-Gertrude Stein in pants, a ridiculous adolescent in revolt against literary tradition with a hair-pin.

"The affair called 'Him' is introduced by the author with the following note: 'Don't try to despise it, let it try to despise you. Don't try to enjoy it, let it try to enjoy you. Don't try to understand it, let it try to understand you.' That'll give you a faint idea of what to expect. If you need a further hint, I may report that the characters include and are named the Missing Link, Six Hundred Pounds of Passionate Pulchritude, the King of Borneo, Second Shape, Mussolini, First Centurion, Fourth Fairy, A Blonde Gonzesse, Nine Foot Giant, First Drunk, Virgo and Third Weird, and that among the twenty-one scenes we find listed 'old howard's conception of roman villa,' 'le père tranquille' and 'semicircular piece of depth.'"

The opinion of the Provincetown Playhouse, quoted above, follows.

Analyse this report, or criticism, of a play. Six lines calling it names, precisely in the rhythm of Ghosts and Gibberings; sixteen lines about the author in totally unrelated matters, and these sixteen full of inaccuracies (the "big kick" in *The Enormous Room* was the author's style, the critics who praise Cummings are neither "one or two" nor "dubious" in standing; the connexion is not with Gertrude Stein, so much as with Joyce) and ending with an appeal to the opinion of the majority which Mr Nathan has specifically ruled out as almost always wrong. There follow four lines quoted from the programme and ten lines about the names of the characters and scenes, in which Mr Nathan is not even fair enough to note that many of the characters he names are in a circus scene, others

in a burlesque, and that the Old Howard is a famous burlesque house in Boston.

I begin—after all these years of admiring Mr Nathan's writing about the theatre—to wonder whether respect is exactly the critical quality it is in his power to give or withhold.

I have quoted all of Mr Nathan's review because it is typical of the whole body of criticism which met Cummings' play. (Mr John Anderson of The New York Journal was the outstanding exception—he actually told what the play was, and I have heard that there was an interesting review, which did the same, in The Wall Street Journal. I am speaking now of the critics of the daily papers only.) And my point is that even if the play had been utterly worthless, it would still have been the reviewer's duty to define and characterize it—literally, give its essential character—before, or instead of, going on to other things.

The newspaper critic has two specific obligations: to the producer of a play he has to be fair; to the public, he has to be illuminating. There is little room left for the exhibition of personality or prejudice. The critic has to know what the playwright was trying to do and to assay his success; and he has to tell his readers these things and indicate to them whether they would be likely to care for the play. I think that in telling their readers—the vast majority—that they would not like HIM, the critics were right; they would have failed in their duty if they had sent the whole patronage of the FOLLIES and THE GREEN HAT and STRANGE INTERLUDE to see HIM. But they failed utterly to inform the minority what HIM was.

The play opens with a woman being placed under an anaesthetic. After a thousand dream-plays it might be easily guessed that the rest of the play goes on in the mind of the woman and is therefore in a sense the record of delirium. The reappearance of the doctor in scene after scene is a further clue and there are various indications that the symbols are being used in accordance with some of the mysteries of psychoanalysis. Setting this aside, as I did when I saw the play because I did not feel the need of that explanation, the nature of HIM still remains perfectly clear. "It is a tragic fantasy . . . the author states his theme and reiterates it throughout the play. The conflict is announced at the very beginning, when the girl says, 'Why should we pretend to love each

other?' and the man says that his life is based on three things—that he is a man, an artist, and a failure."

That the unconscious burlesques our conscious life is a commonplace and in *HIM*, Cummings has specifically not tried to stand a commonplace on its head in order to make it appear novel. He has used it in all simplicity, creating a fantasia in the terms of burlesque, technically even of the burlesque show. It is an eminently suitable technique; for the looseness, the mad logic, the swift changes, the sudden re-entrances of early jokes, themes, or characters, in burlesque shows exactly correspond to features of the subconscious life.

The difficulty for the audience was that fantasy, in general, is either wholly comic or satiric. There were both high and low comedy in *HIM*, but the tragic tension was a disturbing element and Cummings either from wilfulness or lack of skill at times made the mystery more obscure. I say "wilfulness" but, although I know the author and his work fairly well, I am not trying to rival the critics in imputing motives. I mean simply that he may have felt so strongly that certain scenes *must* be as he conceived them, that he allowed them to stand in the face of the certainty that they would puzzle the majority of his auditors. That he ever mystified the audience purely for the satisfaction of doing so, I venture not to believe.

To me the finest scenes were those which seem to take place outside the dream—scenes between the man and the woman, of rare lyric intensity and beauty. Love between men and women on the stage has become so much a matter of convention that actual passion, actual exaltation appear strange and terrifying. They exist in *HIM*—in the long baffling speeches of the man, in the brief sentences and gestures of the woman. The lyricism of Cummings' prose is identical with that of his poetry, and on the stage it is a rare phenomenon.

The Provincetown Playhouse completely fulfilled its function in the production of *HIM*. Its function is not to hold the critical respect of anybody except those interested in experimentation in the theatre. The physical, intellectual, and financial endowments of the Playhouse dedicate it to small audiences who believe passionately in the value of the creative artist. To give such an artist an opportunity to see his work in action, is one of the things the

Provincetown can do; it did it for Eugene O'Neill and it has done it, with courage and a gaiety matching the gaiety of Cummings' own manner, in *HIM*. The play was terribly hard to do and Mr James Light did it well. Certain scenes seemed to me appallingly dull, but I do not see how they could have been made lighter; the significant scenes were all in the tone and style set by the text. The three chief players—Lawrence Bolton, William S. Johnstone, and Erin O'Brien-Moore (the Doctor, Him, and Me)—were perfectly in command of the meaning of the play and of their parts; the massing and manoeuvring of the large cast was done with ease and skill; and the whole play was exciting and depressing, fascinating and dull, but always itself, an integral creation.

The attack on Cummings has been so vicious that I would like to omit my reservations. In all fairness, they are serious. The unity of his play is threatened by the shift of manner between the fantastic scenes and the scenes between the lovers. Threatened, but not ruined because in every case (but one) the scenes in the room follow the picture-scene of the operating-table and so establish a connexion. And, a more serious defect, it seems to me that at times the material has escaped from the author's hand, that it has rolled away and collected barnacles and that these have been incorporated into the texture of the play. The intrusions, the excessive lengths, are to me no proof of an overpowering individuality—the proof of that comes in the careful construction, in the disciplined use of the material elsewhere. I suspect that with other symbols and some refinement of technique, *HIM* might have been more effective—and certainly less tiring. It was tiring—it ran full three hours. But when it was over, one felt that that kind of weariness gave an enormous satisfaction.

GILBERT SELDES



## MODERN ART

WERE we, as a community, deeply engrossed in the study of art—which we are not, alas!—the two exhibitions in the season just ending which would have aroused the greatest interest were those of De Chirico and Picabia. Both of these men seemed to be edging easily and naturally forward into something new and neither had that air of wishing to be new which is usually fatal to spontaneity. Spontaneity, in fact, was their new quality. We have had a Matisse exhibition, and a De Segonzac and a Derain, and all these artists seem to be painting now better than ever before but all of them give the effect of being fixed planets in the sky rather than comets. A planet is something you can pin your faith to more safely than to a comet but just the same something very exhilarating happens when a new star swims into your ken and most people willingly rush to their doors to inspect the phenomenon and thoroughly enjoy talking it over afterward. Picabia's exhibition certainly had a flashing effect that would have brought people to their doorways—were we as a people deeply concerned in questions of art—but, that not being so, it was only the astronomers who got the thrill. They, however, got plenty.

As in De Chirico's case, it was the fact that Picabia is now *painting*, that gave most satisfaction. Picabia used to show here often enough but what he showed were not always certainly pictures. I forget where he comes from—he may be an Argentine, a Spaniard, or a Cuban—but my impression is that he gained a New York reputation as a radical before going to Paris to join in the nihilistic proceedings of the Dadaists. He was not so much interested in construction as destruction. He loved to fling explosives beneath the carriage-wheels of the smug and commonplace. He was certainly of the "bad-boy" type and when he got to Paris he outraged the freedoms even of the city of light. I vaguely recall the scandal of a title he attached to one of his "*oeuvres*" and which, with some assistance from the police, he afterwards changed. Paris loves its "bad boys" and even the city magistrates are never severe upon them, but just the same, Picabia seemed destined for the rôle of "whip" on the side-lines of art rather than

that of a central figure. He distinctly had a genius for attracting attention but lacked that other part of genius—the capacity for holding it.

The recent exhibition implies just the opposite. The half dozen best, and very good, paintings are perhaps not enough to found a lasting name, but the individual who did them is by no means decrepit and the chances are that he could do more if urged. His themes were light and the manner light. He hasn't the horsepower of Picasso. But his mind plays naturally in the modern idioms and there are no check-reins on his fancy. It was the feeling of being untrammelled and knowing perfectly what it was all about that gave the present pictures charm. They had the ease of the sonnets that poor Guillaume Apollinaire used to dash off on a café table at the hour of the *apéritif* to the applause of his friends. They could not have been done except by someone so certain of applause that he was no longer influenced by applause, and as there is no place in the world save Paris where abstract art gets an instant "hand," it followed that these pictures brought us the most distinct whiff of that fair city that we have lately had. I thought there was something elegant in their completion and finish. I thought that an individual of taste who relishes daring and invention and who has no special objection to being slightly in advance of his friends could take genuine pride in possessing them. Some such persons of taste there were, for certain of the canvases sold. My favourite, though, the one called *Les Chiens* which had agreeably composed lines that could be definitely doggy to those who insist on a measure of fact, did not find a purchaser. But I blame myself for this. There were one or two persons still in town to whom I might have telephoned but I didn't—through sheer laziness.

Speaking of sales reminds me that one or two of the artists who are frequently mentioned in *THE DIAL* achieved financial successes, as well as the other kind, this winter. In addition to Mr Kuniyoshi, Mr Andrew Dasburg, Mr Charles Burchfield, Mr Miguel Covarrubias, Mr Marin, and Miss O'Keefe did extremely well for themselves. Those who profess to understand the mysterious workings of the business side of the art game, attribute the furore in the Rehn Gallery over Mr Dasburg's recent output, entirely



to the fact that he won one of the prizes at this year's Pittsburgh International. This may be the true explanation. If so, it is odd enough. . . . Mr Burchfield's success has long since been earned but just for that reason it was also a surprise. Cash receipts and merit are not necessarily consonant. . . . Miss O'Keefe, however, made the profoundest impression of all upon the brokers. A set of small paintings of calla-"lilies"—six, I think—sold to an as yet unnamed connoisseur for twenty-five thousand dollars. This was thought to be some kind of a record. It certainly was, at least, for her. Furthermore, it was announced, these paintings were to go romantically to France where the owner was building a house one room of which was to be consecrated to the "lilies." This event made the hangers-on of the studios gasp but no one has yet ventured to sermonize about it. I, too, at this fagged end of the season, feel unequal to enlarging upon such a subject. . . . Before laying aside my pen, however, there is one other development of the winter that I must mention, and it, too, is not unconnected with business. I refer to the serious sponsorship of modern decorative art by the great department stores. These institutions do as much educating as the colleges and are vastly more flexible and open-minded in their methods. Lord and Taylor's, Macy's, and Wanamaker's have been swift upon the heels of the great decorative art exposition of Paris and this winter have managed to place the "modern note" squarely before the New York public. This public, astonishingly enough, is submissive. So much so that people have already begun to blush at the mention of Louis Quinze and Louis Seize and with characteristic American impetuosity have determined to achieve, if not a native background, at least one that is visibly in this period.

HENRY MCBRIDE

## MUSICAL CHRONICLE

POSSIBLY, when we meet with a kind of ambitious tragedy in the work of art, a species of aspiring dignity comprising marked violence and resignation, we should automatically expect as a parallel in the artist's life little that is accomplished (perfected) and much that is beyond his best management. We should not consider his art invalidated by the apparent discrepancy, as the dying "new psychology" was recently tempting us to do with too much promptitude, but should find it in the nature of things that the same proficiency is not consubstantial to both life and page. The success of an artist resides greatly in his skill at arranging the circumstances of his work; he exemplifies his qualities by the manufacture of an environment for them. The environment of his own life, on the contrary, is more irrelevant to his own particular genius, more definitely forced upon him—and as it would be naïve to assume that any quality, even noble temper, is fitted for more than a certain limited range of conditions, we may expect elements which flourish in his work to droop in his biography. If things "fall right," the integrity of the character may be sufficiently maintained, as it is so noticeably maintained in men like Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill. Others will find themselves involved in conditions which tell against them, at least in comparison with the more sheltered. One may manifest great poise in running from a bomb, and his conduct still appear inadequate as compared to those high *allures* of one who had but to walk away from a brush-fire.

We say as much, obliquely introductive to our reading of the selected Letters of Richard Wagner,<sup>1</sup> recently translated into English. Here indeed, for those who do not find Wagner's work itself vulnerable, is the tendon of Achilles grown well up into the thigh. The man's extreme sanguinity and hopefulness, a constant refusal to be discouraged by a lack of receptivity perhaps un-

<sup>1</sup> The Letters of Richard Wagner. Selected and edited by Wilhelm Altmann. Translated from the German by M. M. Bozman. Two volumes. 8vo. 691 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$10.

paralleled in the history of art, is not untainted by incomprehension. There is little consideration of biologic fitness in his unswerving certitude that the required homage *should* be forthcoming, though here perhaps the artist's Messianic attitude towards his own gospel was but a negligible by-product of a purely technical superabundance, whereby brain tissues are so excessively well arranged for musical concentration that life and confidence become synonymous. Debussy has said <sup>1</sup>: "The undeniable beauty of Liszt's work arises, I believe, from the fact that his love of music excluded every other kind of emotion." Something similar can be said of Wagner, as we could situate in such a mentality not only the power (and particularly the inventiveness) of his "music drama," but also his more or less haphazard treatment of the other aspects of his life. When some hitherto unknown person did Wagner a good turn, the artist quickly hailed a new "friend." Dear friend, for now I can call you that. Similarly, resistance to his purposes was invariably explained as corruption, malice, or jealousy. His later charity, as for instance his patronizing forgiveness of poor Berlioz, comes not from the heart, but from a contented stomach. Such centring about the ego had but to continue long enough to be accepted.

What we are left with, then, is the spectacle of a man for whom the process of creating (and of gaining acceptance for his creations) was the generator of all the other standards of his life; whose productivity could, it is true, be impaired by lesser distractions, but was impervious to mental distresses of the first order, and perhaps reached its height when his intense erotic attachments were most strained and endangered. We feel, despite his assurance of discomfitures, that any major depression was really impossible with him. For though he often speaks proprietarily of his sensitive temperament, "my passionate nature," and though the list of his disappointments was exceptional, in his one essential interest, the production of his art, he remained in a continual process of unfolding and advancement, in that privileged state of *Werden*, of "becoming," which is justly in such high repute among

<sup>1</sup> Monsieur Croche, The Dilettante Hater. By Claude Debussy. With a foreword by Lawrence Gilman. 12mo. 212 pages. The Viking Press. \$2.

German philosophers. His triumphs, considerable as they were, seemed even greater to himself. We find him, after years, looking back on Tannhäuser, and making some changes in the instrumentation, but feeling that the libretto was beyond improvement! Indeed, his pride in the unseemly doggerel of his verse is the one region into which we dare not follow him. But we can understand how his productivity as an artist might serve as the prime determiner of a morality, even making that which seems like hypocrisy or opportunism when judged by other codes, quite loyal when judged by his own. We can understand that a different kind of consistency is required of one whose overt purpose is to leave a "gift to the nation," and that he should ask of other people solely those two essential qualities which his work did not originally contain—success and reward. On laying down the letters, one recalls that elsewhere the conditions have been properly arranged. Impatient of plot, music drama, *Weltanschauung*, one listens to things which are made to happen purely as sound. What day is this? Why this, kind sir, is Good Friday—and the music re-sounds Good Friday, repeats, expands, expatiates upon this mood until it has filtered into one's last, most sluggish cell.

It is all very complicated, all mixed up with scandal, and triviality, and even boredom—and so confused, and even obscured to those who in their hearts know better. But there is one test for the supercilious, a test so desolate, so blasting, that we should hesitate to mention it: let them (mentioning it) write two bars of something with distinction. Regrettably, however, the same test would also obligate us to spend rapt hours contemplating some performer on the slack wire.

After the Wagner letters, we turned to Monsieur Croche, by Claude Debussy. It was very nearly the right sequel. For Debussy was so distinctly in the backwash of Wagnerianism, first its champion, then its denier, and ultimately something of both. He knew the quackery of Wagner's verse to perfection, and he also knew that out of this quackery marvellous music had been produced. We find him, in this indeterminate attitude, insisting that the Ring should be performed in Paris, if only to silence the wild reports of the pilgrims from Bayreuth. We find him admiring the

music of Parsifal while deploring its "message," though his opposition leaves it much less glory than does Nietzsche's.

In other respects, these articles of music criticism, which were written at the beginning of the century, are a bit too sketchy and casual to be of exceptional value to-day. They are written with a suavity and skill wholly absent from the Wagner correspondence (if we except the accurate malice of a letter to his first wife, where Wagner suggests explanations of their difficulties which she may make to her neighbours, and under this guise of helpfulness really conveys to her a summary of his own defence). And they contain in germ many tendencies which have since come to fruition, but which now need sifting rather than foretelling. His sensitive notes on Moussorgsky, Dukas, Richard Strauss, and César Franck make one regret that he did not schematize his articles a little more and give us in the field of music a full set of monographs on his contemporary scene corresponding, say, to De Gourmont's *Book of Masques*.

KENNETH BURKE

## COMMENT

*In der Zeit verliehe mir Gott Fleiss, dass ich wol lernet.*

Albrecht Dürer

DÜRER'S Rhinoceros, Pollajuolo's Battle of the Nudes, and various concepts by Mantegna and by Leonardo da Vinci, have for us that attraction which originality with precision can exert, and liking is increased perhaps when the concept is primarily an imagined one—in the instance of the rhinoceros, based apparently on a traveller's sketch or description. The conjunction of fantasy and calculation is unusual, but many sagacities seem in Dürer not to starve one another. St Jerome and his beast of burden the lion, in the room with the bottle-glass window-lights, the St Eustachius, a small Turner-like water-colour of the Tyrol in the Ashmolean, tempt one to have favourites, and the eye is promptly engaged by that sensitiveness to magnificence in apparel which gives us the knight's parti-coloured clothing and pointed shoes, the "drowsing elegance of the sugar-bag hat," and the little hat "couched fast to the pate like an oyster." Dürer's gifts excited "the admiring courtesy of the Italians," we are told; and certain portraits seem to mirror and to gild in mirroring, Italy's almost finer than Oriental politeness. There is danger of extravagance in denoting as sacrosanct or devout, an art so robust as to include in it that which is neither, but Dürer's separately perfect media do somehow suggest the virtues which St Jerome enumerates as constituting the "hous of cryste"—of which he says in conclusion: And good perseueraunce nouryssheth theym. His mere journeyings are fervent—to the Dutch coast to look at a stranded whale that was washed to sea before he was able to arrive; to Bologna

NOTE: Prints by Dürer and his contemporaries are now on exhibition in the print room of The New York Public Library and will remain till the autumn.

One welcomes additional reproductions of Dürer's woodcuts: The Complete Woodcuts edited by Dr Willi Kurth with introduction by Campbell Dodgson (W. & G. Foyle, Ltd.); and of his engravings on copper: The Masters of Engraving and Etching—Albrecht Dürer, with introduction by Campbell Dodgson (The Medici Society).

to learn as he says, "the secrets of the art of perspective which a man is willing to teach me," and in his several visits to Italy. The secrets of Dürer, however, are not easily invaded, the clearness and simplicity of his signature in the adjusted yet natural housing of the D beneath the mediaevally prominent A, being a subtlety compared with the juxtaposed curves of the modern monogram, the printing of letters backward, or the variously arranged inverting of duplicates.

The reliquary method of perpetuating magic is to be distrusted; nevertheless a living energy seemed still to reside in the wood blocks and engraving tools of Dürer's which were exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum some years ago and one values the effort of experts to recover mutilated originals, to repudiate "copies," and to recognize Dürer's many priorities.

Appreciation which is truly votive and not gapingly inquisitive, commits one to enlightenment if not to emulation, and recognition of the capacity for newness inclusive of oldness which seems in Dürer an apparitional yet normal miraculousness like a heraldic flame or separate fire in the air, could have its part in persuading us to think—with him—not too ill of "subtilty," "*ingenia*," and of "artwork which is altogether new in its shape."



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